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**Official Report  
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des débats  
(Hansard)**

**Thursday 22 October 2009**

**Jeudi 22 octobre 2009**

Speaker  
Honourable Steve Peters

Président  
L'honorable Steve Peters

Clerk  
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**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY  
OF ONTARIO**

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**ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE  
DE L'ONTARIO**

Jeudi 22 octobre 2009

*The House met at 0900.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Good morning. Please remain standing for the Lord's Prayer, followed by the non-denominational prayer.

*Prayers.*

**ORDERS OF THE DAY**

**INTERPROVINCIAL POLICING  
ACT, 2009**

LOI DE 2009

**SUR LES SERVICES POLICIERS  
INTERPROVINCIAUX**

Resuming the debate adjourned on October 8, 2009, on the motion for second reading of Bill 203, An Act to allow for better cross-border policing co-operation with other Canadian provinces and territories and to make consequential amendments to the Police Services Act / Projet de loi 203, Loi visant à permettre une meilleure coopération avec les autres provinces et les territoires du Canada en ce qui concerne les services policiers trans-frontaliers et à apporter des modifications corrélatives à la Loi sur les services policiers.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Further debate?

**Mr. Michael Prue:** I want to preface the remarks I'm going to make to the House by stating that I will be supporting the bill. We hope that it is sent to committee. We have some thoughts and potential amendments that will strengthen the bill.

Having said that, though, I do want to make the following comments: We support this bill, as I said, but we support it understanding that it's not going to solve all the problems of policing. There are already four jurisdictions in Canada that have come along and done a similar bill—those being Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick. We are joining a growing family. This is not a precedent-setting bill. Ontario is not the first to do this but, in fact, if it passes and if it goes through committee and becomes law, we may be the fifth province.

There are some difficulties with this, because only five provinces are on board, Ontario being the largest and most populous province. It would, I think, behoove us to encourage the other provinces. That's the first thing I want to say. We need to encourage the other provinces to do the same, especially Quebec, because the problem of

interprovincial policing, the problem of criminality between Canada's two most populous provinces—being Ontario and Quebec—is something that needs to be explored, and we need to have a reciprocal agreement with Quebec.

It's all well and good to have a reciprocal agreement with Manitoba, which is also a sister and bordering province, but the others are separated from us. It's difficult to envisage, other than if the criminality takes place by air, the transfer of goods, the transfer of services, the transfer of illegal contraband—all of those things generally will take place, and we know that, either by automobile, by truck, by bus, potentially by waterway, and we need to work with our neighbouring jurisdictions especially. So it's important that Quebec be brought on board. It's important, if we are truly to be a Canadian family, that all 10 provinces and three territories be brought on board as well. As I said, Manitoba has done this, and that whole section of northwestern Ontario is likely going to be that portion of the province where the reciprocal agreement at this point will do the most good.

We also share a border, although it's a very small one, with Nunavut—one of the islands in James Bay—in proximity to the northern cities of Attawapiskat and Peawanuck. I'm trying to think of them all here; anyway, those two at least. There is some potential there, although I must state, given the number of people who live in those locations, it will be of course minimal.

There is also the second problem which is not addressed by this bill—and I don't blame the bill because there's nothing that the bill can encourage. I think we need to talk to the federal government, because the real need, in my view, of having a kind of interjurisdictional boundary, even if it's only within a few kilometres of the border, is with the United States. We know—and the federal government knows as well—that many of the problems plaguing our law enforcement officials, plaguing the polity of Ontario, come from the United States, whether that be the smuggling of illegal contraband, whether it be the smuggling of guns and weapons, whether it be the drugs which often cross the borders both ways. That is, to my mind, every bit as important and probably more important than what we are trying to do with the other provinces.

We need to have a kind of agreement and a beefed-up border where the security and the people can go back and forth. The criminals certainly know no boundaries. It is a worldwide phenomenon; you can get literally almost anywhere in the world from here in Toronto in one day, almost literally anywhere—by plane, by high-speed

transit, transportation. You can get there, and the criminals can get there too. In order to stop the flow of illegal contraband and drugs and guns and human smuggling—I don't want to forget that one—then we need to make sure that the borders as well have a kind of rapprochement. I'm suggesting that if we pass this bill, this will give additional ammunition for the Premier, as the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, to go to his counterparts in Canada at a Premiers' conference and talk about expanding this. We need to do everything we can to protect our society from those evils which often come from other jurisdictions.

Now, we share the longest undefended border in the world with the United States, and of course the smuggling of our other neighbour, I guess, the former Soviet Union, now Russia—I imagine not much transpires over the North Pole. And I haven't really heard of all that many difficulties coming out of our other neighbour, which is France, from St-Pierre and Miquelon. I think we need to take a really hard look at the American-Canadian border and what takes place here. It is that international concern that I wanted to bring forward.

**0910**

So, in a nutshell, I'm supporting the bill. I am saying, in supporting the bill, two things have to happen: We have to get the other five provinces and the other three territories on board, so that it is all one seamless ability for police officers to come into other jurisdictions and do the necessary studies, do the necessary enforcement, work in co-operation with Ontario police officials; and the second one is to send that same message to the federal government, that the border, which I believe should remain undefended and free, does require a beefed-up police presence so that a criminal—a person who is intent on harming the people of Ontario through whatever their criminal activity is—cannot simply come from the United States or flee back to the United States without us being able to do what is necessary in conjunction with American officials.

With those two provisos, which I think will give this bill the ammunition to go forward, I would support the bill and send it to committee. I'm sure that my colleague Mr. Kormos, the member from Welland, will have much more to say when he returns. With that, I'll conclude my remarks.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Dave Levac:** I was indeed buoyed by the comments of the member from Beaches–East York, so what I'm going to do is try to address the issues he brought up.

During the debate, and having carriage of the bill, I made it clear that yes, indeed, we will be going to committee; yes, indeed, we will continue to hear from stakeholders; and yes, indeed, we will be working with Quebec. Quebec is already in the process of their piece of legislation, which we'll probably see, if not before the end of the year, then at the beginning of next year. That was a result of an agreement that was signed during the Quebec-Ontario cabinet meetings that took place, with some of the issues that came to light.

The member was also correct in the approach he took, in that he characterized it as a piece of the puzzle. I've been saying from the very beginning that it's not the be-all and end-all. Some people may stand up and say, "It doesn't do this and this and this," instead of saying, "Yes, this is a piece of the puzzle," and it's an important piece of the puzzle, because this is being asked for by our stakeholders, who need to go in there day in and day out, and we want to support them. But indeed it is valid to bring up the other questions you ask. Yes, there are conversations going on with the federal government to ensure that they're having the same kinds of discussions we are talking about between provinces. We want that to happen state to state.

I thought the other piece you mentioned, in terms of Nunavut, was an interesting challenge. What my research indicated to me is that inside of this legislation does not remove or legislate the RCMP, which has jurisdiction across the country. The RCMP can act here, can act in Quebec and can act in Nunavut, and Nunavut reciprocates here in terms of the RCMP officers. They're already signalled to do that.

The three areas this bill does capture, which it does and doesn't do—that is, the three areas we need to hear about—are fresh pursuit: It does not impinge on fresh pursuit. If there's a Criminal Code violation happening, the fresh pursuit legislation across borders is still in effect. The other things this affects and helps, which are part of the puzzle you spoke of, are large events, like the Olympics, and criminal investigations, which is the on-going going after the bad guy.

This doesn't necessarily make it the be-all and end-all, but it helps with the seamless part we're trying to create to give us the advantage over the bad guys. That's the important part that I think we've covered. The member was right to ask whether or not these things would be in place to help us do that. I appreciate the member's support, and I suggest to him very respectfully that we have samples and examples that I'd definitely share with him, as I said I would share them with other members of the House.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further questions and comments? Seeing none, the honourable member for Beaches–East York has up to two minute for his response.

**Mr. Michael Prue:** Thank you to the member from Brant for his discussion. Maybe I should have talked a little bit about the RCMP; you did raise this issue, and I think it's an important one. The RCMP does have jurisdiction across all of Canada, save and except that the two places where their powers are lessened are Ontario and Quebec, because we have the Ontario Provincial Police and they have the Quebec provincial police. The other provinces have agreed to utilize the services of the RCMP and continue to, as do the territories.

I think that's perhaps the difficulty in the perspective I was coming from, and I do acknowledge that the RCMP can go from one jurisdiction to another. But Canada's two most populous provinces, Ontario and Quebec, have

their own provincial police forces, and there is, and has traditionally been, some little bit of tension inviting the RCMP. In Ontario and Quebec, the RCMP is largely relegated to federal issues. So you will see them around issues of drugs, and you will see them around issues of immigration and human smuggling, but you won't see them in a lot of things like corporate fraud and other transborder and transnational issues.

I thank the member for what he said—he is correct—and for the comments he made. He is right: It is but one piece of the puzzle, and Ontario needs to be part of that puzzle. We need to be that key piece that's put into place so that others can join and the puzzle can be completed.

Having said that, I thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank the member from Brant for his comments.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further debate? The honourable member from Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. You look surprised. Did you think your day was over? Sorry.

Anyway, it's a pleasure to speak to Bill 203 this morning. I must say that, in a substantive way, we support this legislation, but I see this so many times in the way that we bring bills to the House, and I sometimes wonder why we do it this way. A bill is given unanimous consent on first reading, you get no input from stakeholders—you have to debate the bill without any input from stakeholders—then, if it passes second reading, you take it to committee, and then, and only then, do you actually hear in a substantive way from the people who are most affected by the bill. So I sometimes think we've got it in reverse in this chamber—maybe not so much on this bill, because the stakeholders are either cops or criminals, and quite frankly, we'll favour the cops every time.

But we are certainly starting to get dribbles of some concerns being raised with respect to some of the details of the legislation, which we haven't heard much about because, of course, those things are sometimes not covered in a very detailed way in the bill. But the premise that is being sought—or the result that is being generally sought by this bill—is something we obviously support: allowing police more freedom to pursue criminals in another jurisdiction, crossing the border in the act of their duties.

One thing that we do need some answers on is, who's going to be paying the bill? Is it going to be the police force where the crime was originally witnessed or whatever—reported? Once they pursue them into another jurisdiction, whose property do they become? Do they become the property of the jurisdiction that has apprehended them or the property of the jurisdiction where the crime was committed? We don't want to have turf wars going on in those situations as well. One of the questions will be, of course, who's going to be paying the bill? Because police costs are not free, as we know.

So there are a number of things that we want to deal with when we get to committee—and also have a better chance of having these discussions with the various

police services that are going to be affected by this and get their input as well.

I know my friend from Beaches–East York, as well as the member from Brant, talked about this. We do hear that there are some issues with the RCMP with respect to the Manitoba border, because they don't have a provincial police force in Manitoba; the RCMP is the one that looks after the policing for that jurisdiction. So there are some issues there as well that I think need to be addressed.

We're hoping that when we get to committee and have a chance to meet with stakeholders, we can have some of these things clarified. Other than that, I think we most certainly will be supporting this bill and hoping that we can make it better when it does get to committee.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Questions and comments?

**Mr. Garfield Dunlop:** A brief comment: I want to let you know that the member is correct that there has been very little response from individuals or organizations to this point, but I can tell you that I met recently with the Ontario Association of Police Services Boards, and they are one group that is looking forward to committee hearings. They do have some concerns around who pays for what. Some clarification is required and maybe even some amendments to the bill. So I'm actually glad he brought that up this morning, because the fact is that they're looking forward to the hearings as soon as possible.

Now, I haven't had any idea when those hearings might be. I don't think we've had any kind of subcommittee meeting to determine any dates etc. I look forward to attending those meetings and getting on with this bill.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further questions and comments?

**Mr. Dave Levac:** Again, to the members for Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke and Simcoe North: Thank you for the support. I think that everyone in this House from all the parties has indicated they are going to be supportive of the bill, with some questions needing to be answered.

And yes, to reinforce again, there will be some hearings and committee work done on this, and for the stakeholders plus anyone else—which is the tradition of this place, that we've reinforced—this will be open to concerns and issues and appropriate amendments. My intention is to always guide this with care to ensure that amendments offered are going to strengthen and improve the bill.

To give you just a short example, in response to one of the NDP members—and I can't remember who it was—I did make an undertaking to find this answer. He wanted to know specific examples. I was in touch with Chief Armand La Barge from York regional, and he said that in the past, York officers have found themselves working outside of Ontario and noted as an example a recent investigation of the theft of a Garda Armoured Car Services vehicle in Richmond Hill. The scope of the investigation eventually widened to Quebec and led to York officers working with the Sûreté du Québec, which means

that this type of legislation would have fast tracked that capacity for the police services to do exactly what this bill is intended to do—and that is to offer that cross border, and Quebec is that piece.

Let's not get too wrapped up on the RCMP issue. The RCMP issue is germane to whether or not there is a jurisdictional, territorial kind of bragging rights piece here. The bad guys are the focus, and I'm glad everyone has stayed focused on that point. This is about legislation to ensure the good guys work together to get the bad guys. It sounds kind of juvenile to say it that way, but we will be using and hearing from the stakeholders, and we will get better legislation as a result of it.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further questions and comments? Seeing none, the honourable member for Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke has two minutes to respond.

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** Thank you very much, and I appreciate the response from the member from Brant.

You know, as we've said before, and not necessarily in the comments today, there's every reason to be proceeding with a bill of this nature. We know that police forces have been looking for this kind of assistance in allowing them to do their jobs better for some time now, so we have no reason to believe that this bill is not going to be helpful in some way.

The member responded to some of the concerns, and we appreciate that. We hope that, through the process of committee and public hearings and getting the feedback from those who may understand these things, quite frankly, better than the people who actually sit in this Legislature—because our job is not understanding, completely and perfectly, legislation; our job is to make decisions at the end of the day, whether that legislation will pass or not—we will have a better understanding of how this bill can affect police services and crime prevention and the apprehension of criminals across this country.

We look forward to that, and we appreciate the government's moves to bring this forward. I hope we can make this the best bill that it can possibly be by having a substantive and worthwhile committee process.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further debate? Seeing none we'll deal with the motion.

Mr. Bartolucci has moved second reading of Bill 203. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

*Second reading agreed to.*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Shall the bill be ordered for third reading?

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** I'd ask that the bill be referred to the Standing Committee on Justice Policy, please.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** So ordered. Orders of the day?

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** No further business, Mr. Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** There being no further business for this morning, this House stands in recess until 10:30, at which time we'll have question period.

*The House recessed from 0924 to 1030.*

## INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

**Hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** I'm very pleased this morning to introduce Mr. Bill Cooke, who is the father of Kevin Cooke, who works in my office.

**Mr. Norm Miller:** I'm pleased to introduce a group that has come down from Burk's Falls to deliver 6,700 petitions here, and I think I have a complete list: Lisa Morrison; Bev Norrena; Jackie Brown; Bette Kitchen; Diane Rutgers; Francisca Bantten; Ken McIntyre; the reeve of Burk's Falls, Cathy Still; Kay Todd; Barbara Barry; Bev Graham; Gwen and Diana Banton; and Lisa Dickenson. I think there's a few others who aren't on my list. I'd like to welcome them to Queen's Park.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** I would like to introduce Brenda and Bob Haynes, who are visiting from Port Colborne today. Welcome to them.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** I would like to welcome to the Legislature guests from London, Ontario: Gary and Mary Margaret Kareen.

**Mr. Paul Miller:** I would like to introduce Mr. Greg Enright and the members of Glendale High School who are here today.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** On behalf of the member for Vaughn and page Matthew Grossi, we'd like to welcome his mother, Darlene, and his sister Natalie sitting in the east members' gallery. Welcome to Queen's Park today.

## USE OF QUESTION PERIOD

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** I'd like to beg the indulgence of the House for just a few minutes to allow me to respond to a concern raised on Tuesday by the member from Carleton–Mississippi Mills relating to the use of language in this chamber.

The member will know that the first requirement for the Speaker before calling any member to order for the use of unparliamentary language is that he has to have heard it. If he hears it, the Speaker then has to consider the context, tone and propensity to cause disorder of the language used. For this reason, words and phrases allowed in one instance may not be in another. That is why the Speakers refrain from ruling after the fact, even if a review of Hansard suggests that similar or identical language was used: Hansard cannot reveal the tone or reaction.

In the case at hand, the member from Newmarket–Aurora repeatedly employed the use of unparliamentary language while the minister was trying to answer. While I do try to exercise the greatest latitude during question period, in this instance I was left with little choice but to intervene.

Having said that, my review of Hansard did reveal that there were perhaps more instances of intemperate language from both sides of the House than is necessary. I

would therefore ask that all members heed my ruling delivered just this week and moderate their language. This should be of no impediment to conducting oneself honourably in the cut and thrust of question period.

## ORAL QUESTIONS

### ELECTRONIC HEALTH INFORMATION

**Mr. Ted Arnott:** My question is for the Premier. Why has the Premier been telling taxpayers that the Auditor General cleared him and Minister Smitherman of handing out millions in untendered contracts when the auditor has said no such thing?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** Just to return to a subject which is important to all of us and remains important to all of us, the auditor made some pretty clear findings, I thought, and offered some very specific and very helpful recommendations. We accept the findings, and we will adopt wholeheartedly the recommendations.

I think he said in particular that there was a lack of oversight. We accept that. I think he said that a lack of oversight and the breaking of rules “go together like a horse and carriage”; we accept responsibility for that. The single most important remedy we’ve already put in place is to ensure that we can no longer have sole-source contracts for our consultants. They must now be part of a competitive bidding process. That’s a very important step forward. That changes a rule, by the way, that had been in place under the previous government. We think it’s no longer appropriate, and there are other things that we’re doing as well to strengthen confidence in eHealth and all systems of government.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Ted Arnott:** Nine different times since the auditor’s report on the eHealth scandal was released, the Premier has quoted the auditor in this House as having said party politics were not a factor in the sweetheart deals the McGuinty government made with Liberal-friendly consultants. But yesterday, when the auditor testified before the public accounts committee, he said, “We didn’t conduct a specific investigation with respect to this.” At the same meeting, the auditor said, “We didn’t do any research into who could be politically tied...” Why is the Premier telling taxpayers the auditor didn’t find proof of political ties when he knows the auditor wasn’t even looking for it?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** That’s an important piece of new information, but I want to read you the rest of the quotation put forward by the auditor. He said, “All we’re saying is, we kept our eyes open; we didn’t see any evidence of it.” That’s what the auditor said. He didn’t see any evidence of party politics. I think that’s important.

I think that what’s important now is that we move forward. We’ve got the findings; we’ve got the recommendations; we know what to do. In fact, we have laid a strong foundation over at eHealth when it comes to put-

ting in place electronic health records for all Ontarians. There’s more work to be done and we are eager to keep moving ahead with that.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Final supplementary.

**Mr. Ted Arnott:** The Premier’s entire defence against calling an inquiry has been this quote that he has distorted and lifted out of context from page 11 of the auditor’s report. But the auditor testified yesterday, and again I quote: “I wouldn’t want to say that our work would have been comprehensive enough to allow someone to conclude that on all ... contracts, without a doubt, we’re concluding that there definitely weren’t political ties.” It’s time the Premier put aside gamesmanship. Tell the whole truth to taxpayers. If the auditor himself says he wasn’t investigating political connections, then why won’t the Premier appoint a commission of inquiry that will do that?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** Just to repeat what was said in the original report, “We were aware of the allegations that ‘party politics’ may have entered into the awarding of contracts and that those awarding the contracts may have obtained a personal benefit from the firms getting the work—but we saw no evidence of this during our work.” He also said—again, I think it’s important to have the entire quotation used. The rest of that quotation is, “All we’re saying is, we kept our eyes open; we didn’t see any evidence of it.” Again, that’s the issue of party politics.

We think that we’ve got a very comprehensive report, comprehensive findings, intelligent recommendations. We accept them wholeheartedly and we will continue to move ahead.

### GOVERNMENT’S RECORD

**Mr. Robert W. Runciman:** My question is for the Minister of Government Services, the minister who is now, under new legislation, the integrity czar for Canada’s worst government. Minister, in that role, ensuring integrity within government, are you concerned about the Premier telling taxpayers that the auditor investigated Liberal ties to the millions of dollars handed out by Minister Smitherman and Management Board when he did not conduct any such investigation?

**Hon. Harinder S. Takhar:** I am very proud of our government’s record. We have taken the right steps to move forward. Let me just talk about some of those steps.

Just recently, the Premier announced four steps to increase accountability to protect taxpayer dollars. We have introduced two-page summaries for travel, meal and hospitality expenses. All OPS employees, political staff, agencies and boards will receive mandatory computer-based training. Expenses of all senior OPS management, cabinet ministers, political staff and senior executives of 22 agencies will be posted online. That talks about the transparency that our government is committed to, and I’m very proud of the record that our government has on that front.

1040

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Robert W. Runciman:** Speaker, like me, I'm sure you didn't hear an answer in that response.

When Sheila Fraser, the federal Auditor General, discovered that Alphonse Gagliano wasted 100 million taxpayer dollars, the federal Liberals referred the scandal to the ethics commissioner of the RCMP, then Justice Gomery. When Ontario's auditor found that Minister Smitherman and the Premier wasted a billion dollars, 10 times as much, the McGuinty Liberals tried to bury the scandal—no police investigation, no public inquiry.

Has the minister, our new integrity czar Takhar, at least contacted the Integrity Commissioner to investigate whether any friends of the Liberals were among those who got rich in this Liberal billion-dollar boondoggle?

**Hon. Harinder S. Takhar:** Sometimes we need to look at the facts, and sometimes the facts speak louder than words. In 2001-02 the total consultant expenditures under the previous government were \$656 million, and we have consistently reduced that number to roughly \$360 million or \$370 million right now. That is a considerable decrease in consultant numbers. So if \$370 million is a big number for them, what about the \$656 million that they had in 2001-02? What do they say about that?

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Final supplementary.

**Mr. Robert W. Runciman:** Still no answer.

The minister, integrity czar Takhar, is responsible for the Public Service of Ontario Act. As the only minister in Ontario history to be found in violation of the Members' Integrity Act, he knows first-hand that ministers have a duty to ensure ethical conduct in their political offices.

The Provincial Auditor has confirmed that his financial audit did not investigate political links between Minister Smitherman or the Premier and their former political aide. Has anyone looked into the ethics of Minister Smitherman's conduct in this billion-dollar scandal?

**Hon. Harinder S. Takhar:** I will refer that question to the Minister of Health.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Yesterday, the auditor said, "I have seen that headline as well: Auditor Says a Billion Dollars Is Wasted." What did the auditor say? "That would be going too far. There is some value that is going to be realized. Certainly, on the infrastructure side, some of that money is going to turn out to benefit the taxpayers."

He also says, "One aspect of the strategic plan that we particularly welcomed was the robust and detailed ... activities to be conducted." It's "a major step forward in crystallizing the government's eHealth priorities and plans, and communicating these to stakeholders."

It's time to actually look at what has happened and stop the political playing that you're doing.

#### TAXATION

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** My question is for the Premier. For the past week, the Premier has told Ontario

families to brace themselves for cuts to their hospitals and health care, to schools and education, to job training programs. At the same time, he's telling them to pay more with a new tax on everything from home heating to hydro to the coffee in the morning. Why is the Premier asking people to pay more and expect less?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** I think there's a very important question that we need to answer together, and that question is being asked by the people of Ontario. These are people who understand that our world has changed somewhat dramatically, and this was something that had been taking place, had been in motion, before the recession got here. It's affecting our economy. It is changing significantly as a result of globalization and other things. And the question is, simply, what do we need to do to make ourselves stronger?

My friend does not have any answers for that. She believes in the status quo. She is a passionate champion and defender of the status quo.

There are certain things we have to do to make ourselves stronger, and one of those is to join 130 other countries that have already risen to the defence of their manufacturers so they can continue to hire more people in the manufacturing sector; that's to have a harmonized sales tax. We're doing that in a way, by the way, that protects our families by reducing their taxes, and we have in place other mitigation strategies as well.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** Well, there's nothing more status quo than kicking the little guy and giving corporate tax cuts in your budgets. That's the status quo. While the Premier is telling Ontario families that the cupboard is bare, he's telling the business sector to belly up to an all-you-can-eat buffet. Not only does his harmonization scheme provide \$5 billion in no-strings-attached tax cuts to business, but he's planning to spend an additional half-billion dollars on another corporate tax giveaway next year. Will the Premier consider delaying these giveaways, or is it only Ontario families who have to pay more and get less?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** I always appreciate my friend's interesting perspective on these things, but let's listen to Pat Capponi, 25 in 5: Network for Poverty Reduction. This is her quote: "This budget has moved the bar forward on housing, tax credits and child benefits in ways that will make a tangible difference in the lives of many Ontarians."

I know that my honourable colleague would like to say that somehow we are on one side or the other. The fact of the matter is, we're doing both. We are trying to ensure that we have a strong economy by making sure our businesses can compete. At the same time, we're looking after our families, particularly our most vulnerable.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Final supplementary.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** In 2001, the current Minister of Finance asked the government of the day the following question: "Can you tell Ontario's families how the \$2.2

billion corporate tax cut will benefit our frail and elderly neighbours who are in your care?" Yet today, it's the Premier of this province who's telling seniors not only to expect cuts but to shoulder more of the tax burden so he can fund the no-strings-attached business tax cuts that he used to oppose. If the Premier is serious about restraint, why does he only expect it from some?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** I've never once heard the honourable member stand up here and say, "Ninety-three per cent of Ontarians will get a permanent tax cut." I would encourage her to reconcile herself to that reality, because that too is part of our budget. The average family with an \$80,000 income will see a permanent 10% tax cut. The first \$36,000 of income will see a 17% tax cut. Ninety thousand more Ontarians will no longer pay any personal income tax. That's the kind of balance that we're bringing through our budget. That's why we have food banks supporting our budget. That's why we have poverty groups supporting our budget.

#### TAXATION

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** This Premier knows very well that for every dollar in consumer taxes that we're going to be paying, only 12 cents are going to come back in income tax cuts. That's the reality. The HST may work for some, but it will not work for Ontario's families.

Yesterday, the Ontario Chamber of Commerce wrote to me to explain that under the HST, and I quote from their letter, "employment will continue to grow, albeit at a slightly lower rate than the status quo." And by "slightly," they mean 40,000 jobs a year. Would the Premier use the word "slight" to describe 40,000 jobs a year lost because of his HST scheme?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** I've got a copy of that letter to the leader of the NDP. It says: "It has been reported in several media that our report concluded sales tax reform will lead to the loss of some 40,000 jobs in the province.

"Let the record show that this narrow interpretation of the report is categorically not true."

I think my colleague knows in her heart of hearts that the reason the harmonized sales tax is so strongly recommended by economists not only here in Canada but worldwide is because in fact it strengthens our economy. It enhances the competitiveness of our businesses. It enables them to hire more Ontarians, which is our ultimate objective: to ensure that there is more employment, more job security for more Ontarians. Our HST is an absolutely integral part of that plan, to achieving that end.

1050

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** On countless occasions, the Premier and his ministers said that the HST will create jobs; in fact, they're shouting it right now. Yesterday's letter from the chamber concedes that the HST will cost Ontario jobs. They say the effect will be slight; I say 40,000 people not getting a job in the middle of a recession is alarming. How can the Premier justify a policy that will cost 40,000 jobs?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** I think I've got to repeat, for the benefit of my colleague, the contents of the letter which was sent to her. Again, the letter says:

"It has been reported in several media that our report concluded sales tax reform will lead to the loss of some 40,000 jobs in the province.

"Let the record show that this narrow interpretation of the report is categorically not true."

In fact, the report explicitly states that the level of employment does not decline as a result of sales tax reform. I think, again, it's important to consider information in its entirety, because it's more accurate when we do that.

**Ms. Andrea Horwath:** The Premier has called the HST the single-most important thing that he can do. Even his cheerleaders at the chamber of commerce concede that that means the loss of up to 40,000 jobs. The HST, coupled with the great corporate tax giveaway, will leave the treasury of this province with a gaping revenue hole. Why is the Premier backing a plan that's going to make life more expensive, that's going to make it harder to find a job, and leads to cuts in the services that Ontario families rely on?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** I'm going to have to suggest to—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Premier?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** I guess I'm going to have to encourage Mr. Crispino to send yet another letter to my honourable colleague, because he came to what I think is a natural and logical conclusion at the end of his letter. At the end of his letter he says, "Thank you for allowing us the opportunity to set the record straight," but apparently that has not worked. The record is not yet straight in the mind of my honourable colleague, so I'll encourage him yet again to send another letter to my honourable colleague.

#### HEALTH CARE

**Mr. Norm Miller:** My question is to the Minister of Health. Minister, today in the public gallery, a number of residents and health care workers have made the long trip from Burk's Falls to show their frustration at losing their health centre. They brought petitions signed by some 6,700 residents, which I'll present today.

In rural areas, we don't have the luxury of having a hospital or doctor's office on every corner, so the loss of this health centre is a significant blow to this community and surrounding-area residents. These residents and health care workers are asking you to reconsider closing the Burk's Falls health centre. Minister, will you do that?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** Let me assure the member opposite and all members of this Legislature that we're committed to providing quality health care for all Ontarians, regardless of where they live. So whether they live in rural areas or in urban areas, we are committed to excellent health care for all.

We do recognize the unique challenges that rural and northern communities face, and that's why we've created

the rural and northern panel. It will identify some of the unique health care challenges, and it will recommend steps that we can take to improve access to health care in rural and northern Ontario using existing resources. Our government is committed to examining the issues and providing a provincial framework to support northern and rural communities. We expect to hear back from them in early 2010.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Norm Miller:** Well, Minister, the panel won't have done its work by the time Burk's Falls is closed. Burk's Falls will be closed by the time this panel reports.

Minister, this is the second trip to Queen's Park for many of these people. Of course, last time they came down here, they didn't know that a billion dollars had been wasted on consultants and cronies by Canada's worst government with little to show for it. They are justifiably upset. You cannot expect people to keep quiet when their health care is in question. Closing the Burk's Falls health centre just pushes those patients on to hospitals in Huntsville or North Bay, forcing them to drive long distances in bad weather for the care they currently get in their own community.

Minister, is this your idea of better health care?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** As I said in the initial question, we want to look at exactly the kind of challenges you raise. We know that people in rural areas face challenges when it comes to distance, when it comes to weather. Access to health care for all Ontarians is very important to us.

I think it's also important to acknowledge that the platform of the party opposite is actually to reduce health care spending. As far as I know, cutting \$2.5 billion out of health care is still part of the Conservative Party platform.

#### HEALTH CARE

**M<sup>me</sup> France G  linas:** Ma question est   galement pour la ministre de la Sant   et des Soins de longue dur  e.

Today in the gallery are Bob and Brenda Haynes from Port Colborne. Bob's mother, Mrs. Haynes, recently developed a blood clot and decided that she'd better get to the hospital and get some care, like all of us would do. But Mrs. Haynes lives in Port Colborne, and they no longer have an emergency department. Mrs. Haynes finally got to an emergency room in a different hospital in a different community. With all the waits and delays, precious time had been wasted and tragedy struck. Mrs. Haynes suffered a severe stroke.

Minister, how can you allow health care cuts to rural communities that put our families at risk?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** First, let me express my sincere condolences and wishes for the very best for your family. I think this story demonstrates how precious our health care system is to all of us.

I think it's also very important to acknowledge that there have been no cuts to health care. There have been, year after year, increases to health care. In fact, we have

increased access to health care, we've increased spending in health care. In the Niagara area, we have enhanced health care substantially. In fact, we've increased spending by over \$88 million. That's not to say there aren't challenges going forward. It is what I am committed to doing.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**M<sup>me</sup> France G  linas:** The reality is that the emergency department was not there and his mother had a severe stroke. The reality is also that your government has given its blessing to emergency room and urgent care centre closures across many northern and rural communities, while we all know a million dollars a day is handed out to consultants; a billion dollars went to eHealth with little to show for it. In the gallery, like my colleague mentioned, there are residents from Burk's Falls who lost their urgent care centre and they are seeking answers.

Now Ontarians are being told that there are more cuts to services on the way. Will this government agree to a moratorium on northern and rural health care service cuts until the expert panel that you referred to releases its report?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** The only thing we are doing is improving health care in this province, and I tell you that we have made tremendous gains.

When I think back to 2003, when I was first elected, there was a serious lack of access to primary care physicians. Today, over 800,000 Ontarians have access to primary care that they didn't have before. That includes people in rural areas, that includes people right across the province.

When I was elected in 2003, people waited for a hip replacement for well over a year. We've cut wait times for hip replacements by 57%. That's 200 days faster that people are getting new hips than they were when we were elected.

We can talk about cataract surgery. People were waiting well over a year, sometimes two years, for cataract surgery. We've been able to cut wait times for cataract surgery by 203 days. That's 203 days that people are able to read—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. New question.

1100

#### FLU IMMUNIZATION

**Mr. Eric Hoskins:** My question is for the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. I was pleased to hear yesterday that the federal government has approved the H1N1 vaccine for use in Canada and that provinces, including Ontario, have begun distributing the vaccine to communities. My St. Paul's constituents have begun asking me when vaccination against H1N1 will begin in their community. Many have young children or specific medical conditions and want to ensure they get vaccinated early so they can be protected against the potential serious impacts the flu could have on them.

Could the minister please tell this House what Ontario's strategy is to get the vaccine out to Ontarians, especially those who need it the most?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** This is a very important question, and I do urge all members of the Legislature to actually pay attention to this because it's important for all of our constituents.

We got federal approval yesterday for the H1N1 vaccine. The vaccine is already on the road getting out to public health units. Our public health officials are deploying the 700,000 doses we've received so far. Vaccinations will begin next week, in some locations as soon as Monday.

We are hoping that people will respect the prioritization of immunizations. There are some people who need it more than others—who need it first. We are asking to let these people go first: people 65 and under with chronic conditions; healthy children six months and over, up to five years; people living in remote and isolated communities; health care workers; and household contacts of care providers of people who are at high risk but not able to be immunized.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Eric Hoskins:** I look forward to getting my vaccination, but I also will wait my turn. I look forward to passing along this information to the residents of St. Paul's and telling them to visit [ontario.ca/flu](http://ontario.ca/flu) for more information.

There have been a number of concerns raised by health officials, doctors and the media regarding the H1N1 vaccine and its possible effects on pregnant women. Many of my constituents are extremely concerned about how safe this vaccine is for themselves, their wives, their sisters and their friends. It is critical that we ensure Ontarians are protected against the spread of this virus, but it is understandable that there are some apprehensions when there are contradictory reports.

Can the minister please explain how pregnant women should go about getting the H1N1 vaccine?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** I appreciate the opportunity to clear up some of the confusion around this.

Let me be clear: The vaccine is safe for women who are pregnant and they should get vaccinated. We are recommending that all pregnant women with pre-existing health conditions and healthy pregnant women in the second half of their pregnancy—that's more than 20 weeks—should speak to their health care provider about receiving the—

**Hon. Margaret R. Best:** Adjuvanted.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** The adjuvanted vaccine, thank you, the vaccine with the booster.

Healthy pregnant women in the first half of their pregnancy are at less risk of complications from the flu and should wait to receive the unadjuvanted vaccine when it's available. This recommendation is based on agreement among the federal and provincial governments of Canada and based on the World Health Organization's recommendations in July.

I do encourage all pregnant women to get vaccinated. You will not only protect yourself, you will protect your unborn child.

#### POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION

**Mr. Jim Wilson:** My question is for the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities. Under the leadership of this government, Ontario ranks dead last in all of Canada for university class sizes, student-to-faculty ratios and per student funding—only the state of Alabama has a worse student funding record, in all of North America—yet another reason why this government has been declared the worst government in Canada.

But just yesterday, we learned from Statistics Canada that this government has finally achieved a first place finish—yes, first place, as the province with the highest tuition fees in all of Canada. As the Canadian Federation of Students said, "There's no question that Ontario's students are losing out."

Is this not confirmation that the minister's Reaching Higher plan was nothing more than a plan to reach deeper into the pockets of Ontario students?

**Hon. John Milloy:** The short answer is no. The Reaching Higher plan was the largest single investment in post-secondary education in this province in 40 years.

The question that we need to ask in light of the statistics that the member refers to is, is higher education affordable here in the province of Ontario? And I'm very proud to say that of the \$6.2 billion, \$1.5 billion went towards student aid, giving the province of Ontario one of the most generous student aid programs in the country.

At the same time, as the honourable member is aware, we do limit tuition increases through a framework, and if a university or college does increase tuition within that framework, they have to make sure that they provide additional funding for students so that financial reasons are never an obstacle to students attending post-secondary education in the province of Ontario.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Jim Wilson:** When all is said and done, you have the distinction, whether you want to acknowledge it or not, of being the province with the highest tuition fees in all of Canada. Nova Scotia was the highest up until this year; they actually lowered theirs by a few hundred dollars because they were so embarrassed that they were ripping students off. But you seem to think that's just normal.

The Ontario Undergraduate Student Alliance says that students have seen their costs grow from what was once a reasonable and manageable rate to what is now an amount that is difficult, if not sometimes impossible, to earn over the summer, even when times are good. Perhaps tuitions wouldn't be so high in this province if you weren't spending \$1 million per day on consultants through untendered contracts. In this ministry alone, the government gave a \$435,000 untendered contract to John Ronson, the co-chair of the 1995 Liberal election campaign.

I ask the minister, is it the intention of this government to make post-secondary education so unaffordable—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you, Minister.

**Hon. John Milloy:** I'm very proud that Ontario has one of the best post-secondary education systems in the country, if not the world. We boast universities and colleges which are world class. We have made significant investments—\$6.2 billion through the Reaching Higher plan, and through the knowledge infrastructure program we came together with the federal government to invest \$1.5 billion.

We have 100,000 more students in the system, and I would put our record up against theirs. Let me remind the honourable member that when his party was in power, they cut student aid by 41% and they increased tuition at universities by 71%. We invested \$6.2 billion; they cut \$435 million from Ontario's colleges and universities in their first two years in office.

#### SENIOR CITIZENS

**Mr. Paul Miller:** My question is to the Minister responsible for seniors. The United Senior Citizens of Ontario have written to the minister with a summary of health, housing and transportation resolutions from their 51st convention this past August. The resolutions reflect the tragic cuts that this government has already made to seniors' services like chiropractic care and physiotherapy. Seniors are even charged user fees for their prescriptions.

This government is issuing its economic statement this afternoon. What additional cuts, costs and loss of service will seniors suffer after 3 o'clock?

**Hon. M. Aileen Carroll:** I believe I'm correct in directing the question to the Minister of Health since the issues all relate to health.

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** We have made better health care services for the people of Ontario a very high priority for our government. Those investments disproportionately benefit seniors. I think we would all understand that our health care dollars are being well spent and we're getting better results for seniors because of that.

As I said in answer to an earlier question, hip replacement is a really good example. That is an issue that seniors deal with almost exclusively. People used to have to wait well over a year—two years for hips. They're down by 57%. CT scans: We're making some good progress on that. General surgery: We're coming down on wait times for that. Our whole aging—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Supplementary?

**Mr. Paul Miller:** You might want to refer that one to where it should go.

This government has already refused to legislate bathing and personal care standards in long-term-care homes. It has privatized many health, residential and other seniors' services, the basics that seniors need to live a comfortable, affordable, dignified life. On top of all this, this government's planning to impose the dreaded and dread-

ful HST, which many retired persons have calculated will cost them significantly more every year from now on.

When will this minister and the government finally put the financial and health needs and the dignity of seniors at the top of their priority list?

1110

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** One of the signature investments in health care that we've made is the aging-at-home strategy. It's over \$1 billion that is being used right now to make sure that seniors get the care they need in their own homes. It's initiatives such as meals on wheels; it's home care; it's more kinds of services. If you are concerned about the care that seniors are getting, I can assure you that our aging-at-home strategy is a very effective use of our dollars, it benefits seniors and it is the right way to go. It is the way we need to go. As our population ages, we need to improve services—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** I just remind the honourable member from Hamilton—

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** I just ask the honourable member from Hamilton East—you just asked a question—

**Mr. Paul Miller:** I didn't get an answer.

*Interjection.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** I just remind the member that if he is dissatisfied with a response that comes from any minister, he has the right under our standing orders to call for a late show, and I would appreciate that he would listen to the response.

Minister?

**Hon. Deborah Matthews:** It's okay; I'm done.

#### TAXATION

**Mr. Lou Rinaldi:** My question is to the Minister of Revenue. Minister, the manufacturing industry plays an important role in my riding and many ridings across Ontario. Recently, communities in my riding have been hard hit by job losses as a result of the global economic recession. In Port Hope alone, companies such as Viceroy, and Collins and Aikman, are facing serious challenges. I want to know what our government can do to help these companies and help preserve these jobs. These jobs allow people to provide for their families and contribute to the Ontario economy.

Business has a concern about the implementation of the HST and what it's going to mean to them. Minister, what is the effect of the HST going to be in the manufacturing sector?

**Hon. John Wilkinson:** I want to thank my colleague for the question. We are going to give our world-class manufacturers in this province a world-competitive tax system so they can compete and win on the world stage. That is the future of manufacturing. That's why the Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters have been calling for many years for us to reform our tax system. Specifically for manufacturers, it will provide some \$1.1 billion worth

of relief, relief that will allow our companies to be even more competitive on the world stage.

Ontario exports some 80% of what we make in this province. We export it to our sister provinces, to our friends to the south and around the world. What we need to ensure is that those companies competing on the world stage have a world competitive tax system. That's exactly why, through the HST and input tax credits, they'll receive some \$490 million worth of tax relief a year, some \$380 million in corporate tax savings and \$280 million with the elimination of the capital tax.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Lou Rinaldi:** There is a lot of misinformation out there regarding the HST. A group of businesses called the Smart Taxation Alliance have come together to support the HST because it will encourage business investment in Ontario and the creation of jobs. This group includes the Ontario Chamber of Commerce, AGS Automotive Systems, Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters, the Ontario Road Builders' Association, the Ontario Trucking Association, the Retail Council of Canada, and the TD Bank Financial Group.

Support continues to grow. The Information Technology Association of Canada and the Railway Association of Canada recently joined the Smart Taxation Alliance. Just yesterday, the Ontario Chamber of Commerce sent an open letter to both leaders of the opposition asking them to take the debate seriously and stop misrepresenting the facts. Minister, who can we trust on this issue? The business—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. Minister?

**Hon. John Wilkinson:** I believe that the Ontario Chamber of Commerce has been very clear on this. They issued a report called Made in Ontario. They didn't issue a report called Made Up in Ontario, I say to our friends in the third party.

It is important that we look at what the Ontario Chamber of Commerce has said. What they've been saying very consistently is that on the global stage, where we compete for jobs, we need to be competitive, and there are important things that we can do. The one thing that there is almost complete unanimity on in regard to economists is that this is the right thing to do. Difficult as it is, it is the right thing to do.

We on this side of the House say that the status quo is unacceptable. Perhaps those on the other side have a better idea, but I have yet to hear it. We are very clear, on this side of the House, that we need to ensure that our economy is growing and that the jobs of the 21st century are coming right here to Ontario. It is that growth that allows us to afford the high-quality public services that are our birthright in this province, and we will make the difficult decisions to ensure that we are—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. New question.

## CURRICULUM

**Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer:** My question is for the Minister of Education. Minister, many students coming

out of high school do not have the basic math skills needed for university programs such as business, science and engineering. As you know, as a result, it is becoming more common for Ontario universities to offer remedial math courses to these students. Brock, Carleton, McMaster, Algoma, Wilfrid Laurier and York are just a few of the universities that have been forced to offer remedial math programs.

Minister, this indicates that there is a serious problem with our math curriculum. What will you do to ensure that our students have the necessary math skills when they enter university?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** First of all, this is the first question from my new critic, and I want to acknowledge her depth of experience as a former minister. I look forward to working with her across the floor.

I just want to note that, if we look at objective measures and we look at how we're doing internationally, the results of the pan-Canadian assessment program show that Ontario's English language students are achieving—we're the only ones to score above the Canadian average in math. So, in fact, if we look at objective measures, the resources that we have put into our schools, the professional development that we have invested, are bearing fruit.

There is obviously always more to be done, but I think we can be very proud of the fact that more kids are doing better and we've got 77% of students graduating from high school. When we came into office, 68% of kids were graduating from high school, so the investments that we're making are paying off.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer:** Again to the minister: According to Professor David Vaughan, the head of the math department at Wilfrid Laurier University, "The problems have gotten worse." He indicates, "Students are coming to universities with diminished mastery of many of the basic skills." This results in more students likely to fail, drop their math course and receive lower grades if they don't receive remedial help.

Minister, I think you would agree that this is a very serious and complicated problem that we shouldn't be foisting on our universities to solve. It requires immediate attention to the math curriculum at the high school level if we're to achieve the high standards that are absolutely necessary if we're going to be able to compete globally.

Minister, what curriculum changes are you prepared to make to help our students achieve math success?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** In fact, we are constantly reviewing the math curriculum. We created a minister's task force on senior mathematics and consulted with university professors. We brought university professors in to talk with us about what changes we should make. Based on that consultation, we revised the grade 12 math curriculum. It was implemented in 2007-08, and it will take a couple of years to see the full fruits of that.

But I just want to go back again to the international comparisons. If you look at how we're doing internation-

ally, Ontario students are scoring very high. If we look at science—and I think we can understand that a good understanding of math is important in science—and we look at the PISA results—the Programme for International Student Assessment—in overall science, only Finland and Hong Kong performed higher than Ontario. So, by objective measures, Ontario students are doing very, very well.

#### POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** A question to the Premier: Premier, while your government squandered close to \$1 billion on eHealth, spent \$389 million on consultants and hid hundreds of thousands of dollars in secret payments to Ontario government bureaucrats, university tuition fees in Ontario rose between 20% and 36%, making Ontario the most expensive place in Canada to get a post-secondary education. Ontario undergraduates pay close to, if not, \$6,000 a year in tuition.

When is your government going to redirect its generosity away from privileged insiders to university students?

1120

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** To the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities.

**Hon. John Milloy:** I remind the member again that the real question is the affordability of post-secondary education here in the province of Ontario. I'm very, very pleased to say that we have one of the most generous student support systems in the country. We've more than doubled our investments in student aid since 2003. We've tripled the number of grants available to students. In fact, right now one in four students receive non-payable grants.

In terms of tuition itself, I continue to remind the honourable member that we have a tuition framework which limits increases in tuition at colleges and universities. If a college or university takes advantage of an increase within that framework, at the same time they have to provide additional financial assistance to students to make sure that financing is never an obstacle to a student attending post-secondary education.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** Students are drowning in debt, and the minister keeps saying, "We're working on a quality life preserver." That's the answer he gives us all the time. Ontario is at the bottom in Canada in per capita funding for post-secondary education. Class sizes in our universities are the largest in Canada. Many of our university courses are taught by part-time professors. Many universities have flat fees for part-time students. Text-book and travel grants have been cut in half. And your record-setting tuition rates will increase the crippling debt of our students at a time when many graduates have been unable to find jobs.

Minister, why is it that every other province in the country is able to take better care of their university students than you are?

**Hon. John Milloy:** Again, I believe that we have one of the best post-secondary systems in the country, if not the world, here in Ontario. Over the last number of years, we have welcomed 100,000 more students into our colleges and universities. The member speaks about student assistance. I would point out that when it comes to student aid, the loan default rate is the lowest it's ever been in the province of Ontario. We've tried to take a balanced approach. We've limited tuition and we've increased student aid. Mr. Speaker, they tried to take a balanced approach as well: They increased tuition by 50% and the NDP cut student aid by 50%. That was their version of balance.

#### SERVICES EN FRANÇAIS

**M. Yasir Naqvi:** Ma question s'adresse à la ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones. Le commissaire aux services en français, François Boileau, a dévoilé hier son deuxième rapport annuel sur l'état des services en français en Ontario. De nombreux francophones de mon comté attendaient ce rapport. J'aimerais que la ministre dise à cette Assemblée ce qu'elle pense de ce rapport et ce qu'elle compte faire pour répondre aux recommandations qu'il contient.

**L'hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** Premièrement, je voudrais féliciter mon collègue d'Ottawa—Centre pour son intérêt à apprendre la langue de Molière. Félicitations.

J'ai été heureuse de recevoir hier le deuxième rapport du commissaire aux services en français. Lorsque nous avons créé ce Commissariat aux services en français, notre objectif était d'améliorer l'accès de la communauté francophone à des services de qualité. Alors c'est une illustration supplémentaire que notre gouvernement est un gouvernement responsable et engagé vers plus de transparence. Nous prouvons que nous sommes prêts à rendre des comptes à la population que nous servons.

L'Office des affaires francophones est déjà en train d'analyser les recommandations du commissaire en collaboration avec d'autres ministères, et je m'engage aujourd'hui à travailler avec mes collègues pour mettre en œuvre ses recommandations.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**M. Yasir Naqvi:** Je suis heureux de voir que le gouvernement prend très au sérieux le travail du commissaire. L'année dernière le commissaire avait rendu son premier rapport et avait fait trois recommandations. J'aimerais que la ministre nous dise ce que le gouvernement a fait pour répondre aux recommandations du premier rapport du commissaire aux services en français.

**L'hon. Madeleine Meilleur:** Notre gouvernement a bien avancé dans les recommandations.

Tout d'abord, j'ai annoncé en juin dernier une nouvelle définition plus inclusive des francophones qui a permis d'identifier en Ontario près de 50 000 Ontariens de plus qui utilisent le français couramment.

Ensuite, nous avons mis en place en mars un nouveau modèle de gestion à l'intérieur des ministères avec la

création de cinq chefs de services en français qui ont un accès privilégié aux sous-ministres.

Enfin, la troisième recommandation concerne notre pouvoir réglementaire sur près de 7 500 agences. Alors l'Office des affaires francophones a commencé une analyse juridique qui devrait déboucher bientôt sur des recommandations. Le commissaire est conscient que c'est un travail de longue haleine, et j'ai hâte de poursuivre ce travail avec lui et mes autres collègues en ce qui concerne les recommandations qu'il a annoncées hier.

#### TIRE DISPOSAL

**Ms. Sylvia Jones:** My question is for the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs. I've heard from farmers that your government has introduced yet another cost that is hurting our agricultural community. A farmer from Dufferin-Caledon recently came to see me about the tire stewardship fee that came into effect on September 1. To replace a 42-inch tractor tire, there is now a \$250 fee. By comparison, for a car tire the new fee is \$5.84. Minister, why are you imposing this discriminatory new fee on farmers?

**Hon. Leona Dombrowsky:** To the Minister of the Environment.

**Hon. John Gerretsen:** First of all, as everyone knows, it's not a tax. It is an environmental fee that goes to the stewardship council of Ontario to make sure that the tires that we have an overabundance of in this province—over 11 million abandoned tires are all over the province—are properly recycled.

This government believes that we have a stewardship of the environment and one good way to do it is to make sure that those items that can be properly disposed of and properly recycled into other material should—that we should do that. That's exactly what the tire recycling program is all about. It is not money that's coming to the government. It's coming to the stewardship council, which will make sure that the proper recycling is done.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Supplementary?

**Ms. Sylvia Jones:** I asked the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs because it is her responsibility to defend Ontario farmers. The minister is proving once again that she refuses to defend Ontario farmers.

Minister, since the Minister of Agriculture will not defend Ontario farmers at the cabinet table, will you immediately exempt farmers from the tire stewardship program?

**Hon. John Gerretsen:** I'll refer the question back to the Minister of Agriculture.

**Hon. Leona Dombrowsky:** I think that it's very important to remind the people in this assembly and to say to farmers—who, by the way, are the first stewards of this earth and who look for every opportunity to demonstrate environmental responsibility. I would say to the honourable member that before any of this was considered, there was—

*Interjections.*

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** I will remind the honourable member from Dufferin, as I reminded another member earlier: If one is dissatisfied with an answer, they have an opportunity under the standing orders to call for a late show.

Minister of Agriculture.

**Hon. Leona Dombrowsky:** It's very important to remember that when the government moves in this direction, there is an opportunity for the public to provide their input.

My colleague the Minister of the Environment would remind the folks here that these fees are part of the cost of doing business, and for farmers that does become a part of their business program, and with programs in the agriculture industry, they can claim that as a business expense.

Farmers, I'm sure, in Dufferin-Caledon want to be environmentally responsible—

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** Thank you. New question.

#### ASSISTANCE TO FARMERS

**Mr. Michael Prue:** My question is to the Premier. Yesterday I asked the Minister of Finance whether the government would consider implementing a tax credit for farmers who donate surplus crops to food banks. For every dollar that the tax credit costs, \$7 of fresh food will make it on to the tables of low-income families—140,000 children. That's an excellent return on investment.

In his answer yesterday, the Minister of Finance chose to attack me and the NDP rather than comment on this innovative idea. So I am asking the question again, this time to the Premier: Will the government implement a food producer donation tax credit?

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** Let me just make public the private conversation that the Minister of Finance and I had subsequent to the question being put forward to the minister. We both thought that there may be something to this. The Minister of Finance has in fact undertaken to consider this. It was the first time he had been apprised of this particular possibility.

I'll tell you why I am personally drawn to it—and I'm not making any commitments—because some time ago, I had the privilege of putting forward a private member's bill, a good Samaritan bill, that enabled people in the fast food industry and our grocery stores to make contributions of food, which would otherwise go into the garbage, to our needy. That worked, and it worked well. As I said to the Minister of Finance—he's undertaken to take a serious look at this, just so you know.

**Mr. Michael Prue:** I thank the Premier for coming to an entirely different conclusion than his Minister of Finance, because millions of pounds of fresh food are wasted every year in Ontario. At the same time, food banks lack healthy produce to provide to an increasing number of Ontarians forced to turn to them for help.

Tax credits for crop donations to food banks have been successfully implemented in Oregon, Colorado and

North Carolina. The Ontario Association of Food Banks and the Ontario Federation of Agriculture support the idea; so do thousands of hungry Ontarians.

I thank the Premier for having a change of heart, and I look forward to him saying a good deal more in the future in support of this good idea.

**Hon. Dalton McGuinty:** As I said, I don't want to exaggerate; neither do I want to diminish the commitment. We are going to take a serious look at this. I'm drawn to it. I like the sound of it. Obviously there is a cost to it, and we need to take a look at that as well.

What I can say, in that very vein, is that when there was a sow cull in Ontario, Ontario families benefited from that. We moved quickly to provide \$110,000 to process over 100,000 pounds of pork, something that was welcomed by the Ontario Association of Food Banks. As I say to my honourable colleague, I appreciate the idea, I appreciate his championing this idea, and we will indeed give this very serious consideration.

#### TOURISM

**Mr. Rick Johnson:** My question is for the Minister of Tourism. As we all know, the economy has been on the minds of everyone lately. There is no doubt that these are challenging times.

I know that Ontario's tourism industry is feeling the effect of the economic climate as well. It is facing significant challenges, including confusion over passport requirements, the fluctuation of the Canadian dollar and the state of the economy. These challenges have impacted each and every community in Ontario, including in my riding of Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock.

In this time of economic concern, can the minister explain to this House what the McGuinty government is doing to sustain the tourism industry across the province?

**Hon. Monique M. Smith:** As I acknowledged earlier this week, these are challenging times, and they are certainly challenging times for the tourism industries, like so many other sectors in the province.

Ontario's festivals and events are a major element of our tourism industry and an economic driver for many, many communities across the province. Firstly, I'd like to just mention to the member and to the House that it was the McGuinty government that created Celebrate Ontario, a program that is committed to providing ongoing funding in its program and to provide funding to events and festivals across the province.

Again this year, we are pleased that we are investing \$11 million in the upcoming Celebrate Ontario 2010. Last year, we were able to help 224 festivals and events in the province. This was more than double the number of events we helped the year before.

I'm pleased to advise the House that on September 30, an invitation to festivals and events organizers was extended to apply to our program for 2010. The program not only helps festivals and events enhance their programming, it also gives both residents and visitors new reasons to travel to a variety of areas across the province.

**The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters):** The time for question period has ended.

This House stands recessed until 1 p.m. this afternoon.  
*The House recessed from 1134 to 1300.*

#### SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** I have a message from the Honourable David Onley, the Lieutenant Governor, signed by his own hand.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** The Lieutenant Governor transmits supplementary estimates of certain sums required for the services of the province for the year ending March 31, 2010, and recommends them to the Legislative Assembly.

#### MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

##### NATIONAL FOSTER FAMILY WEEK

**Ms. Sylvia Jones:** The week of October 18 to 24 is National Foster Family Week. I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the tremendous commitment that foster families make to our children.

Foster families are not only responsible for giving children the basic necessities of life, but also creating a home where they feel loved and protected. Last year, over 7,000 foster homes provided family-based care for vulnerable children in Ontario. As it stands, over 27,000 children in Ontario are in need of alternative care from children's aid societies. The importance and value of foster families is immeasurable.

We must remember that volunteers strengthen, enhance and augment children's aid society programs. These programs could not function without these skilled and committed people. With their dedication, vulnerable children in Ontario are able to live in a caring home.

Professionals also play an integral role. Over 8,000 full-time employees work for children's aid societies. Without their support, foster families would be unable to receive the help they need.

However, while children's aid employees strive to improve the lives of families in Ontario, Liberal budget cuts have left CASs struggling to retain their valuable and committed employees. With looming cuts, foster families should be concerned that their support network will not be there for them and their families.

Foster families play a fundamental role for children in need. Our communities have been strengthened because of these remarkable citizens. I thank and applaud them for their efforts.

##### SCOTTY RAMAGE

**Mr. Wayne Arthurs:** I rise in the House today to commend an extraordinary constituent in my riding of Pickering-Scarborough East. Alfred Ramage, better

known simply as Scotty, is the most committed volunteer in our community that you could possibly find. At the age of 78, Scotty has been married to his wife, Betty, for the past 56 years, and has been volunteering his time consistently for the past 40 years.

Mr. Ramage enlisted in the British army, where he served from 1948 to 1951, and joined the militia for the next eight years. He then immigrated to Canada.

In 1969, Scotty began volunteering with St. John Ambulance, with whom he is still involved, helping to teach first aid courses, standing on duty at hockey arenas during community events and personally assisting at two major accidents, at one of which, a train derailment, he spent two solid days. Mr. Ramage has received a medal from St. John Ambulance for his long years of service.

Scotty is also known in our riding as a committed community member who has gone above and beyond giving to the Red Cross, having donated 189 pints of blood. He was awarded a pin to commemorate his 150th donation.

To list this generous man's achievements would take far more time than is available to me, but I can tell you that Mr. Ramage has received numerous awards, including the town of Pickering civic award. He is past chairman of Poppy Day for the Royal Canadian Legion and past president of Branch 606 in our riding.

To truly commemorate Scotty's tremendous outreach in our community, he had the honour of receiving the Governor General's Caring Canadian Award in 2007.

I want to congratulate Scotty for his tremendous work in our community.

#### ENDANGERED SPECIES

**Mr. John Yakabuski:** When the Minister of Natural Resources introduced Bill 184, the Endangered Species Act, I expressed concern at the time that the government had surrendered to the agenda of those opposed to logging and that the legislation was based on political science. After hearing of the regulations concerning the habitat of the wood turtle, there is no doubt that is true. The wood turtle habitat regulation received cabinet approval after one meeting in Toronto. The people whose livelihood will be most affected were not part of the meeting. Those vehemently opposed to logging got whatever they asked for—this, without any scientific study to support the request.

Why is the McGuinty government willing to enact regulations that will literally devastate the economy of my riding of Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke? The answer appears to be simple mathematics: It's all about votes. Whatever happened to principles and doing what is right? Cabinet approved this regulation without consideration for the crippling effect it would have on the rural people most affected. No socioeconomic assessment was ever conducted. Sacrificing the people of rural communities to satisfy those who despise their way of living is clearly putting politics over people.

This regulation has not yet been filed. I would ask the Premier to do the right thing and table it until meaningful consultations with those affected are held. You have your hands around their throats. Will you squeeze tighter, ensuring their demise, or release your grip, let them breathe and listen to their side of the story?

#### CHILD CARE

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** Wednesday, October 21—yesterday—was Child Care Worker and Early Childhood Educator Appreciation Day. This year, Dr. Charles Pascal, a constituent of mine in Toronto–Danforth, received the annual award for excellence in advocacy by the Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care and CUPE Ontario for his work with our best future in mind.

This past summer, I met with a group of frustrated parents in my riding who were anxious to find the safe, affordable, well-run daycare, publicly funded child care, that's not only good for our children, our families and our communities but also is essential to help us rebuild Ontario's economy.

There are seven concerts for children and parents being held around the province from October to November of this year, sponsored by the Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care, CUPE Ontario and the Ontario Federation of Labour, to advance the child care agenda. The event in my riding of Toronto–Danforth, called It's Time to Jump Up for Public Child Care, will be at Riverdale Collegiate, 1094 Gerrard Street East, on November 8, from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. Chris McKhool and Quebec's Genticoru will be performing. There will be readings by local authors and goodies for kids to bring home.

I urge everyone to come out and support daycare and support these events. I'll be there showing my support.

#### HANOVER VENEER

**Mrs. Carol Mitchell:** Last Friday, I had the opportunity to make an exciting funding announcement on behalf of the Minister of Northern Development, Mines and Forestry. Bernie McGlynn Lumber will receive a \$191,300 grant through the ministry's forest sector prosperity fund in order to establish a new company, Hanover Veneer, in the community of Hanover, which will produce high-quality veneer panels. This company will also be provided a loan guarantee of \$765,000.

Hanover Veneer is a manufacturer of high-quality hardwood veneer panels. This facility is one of only a few integrated mills that can slice and splice veneer in the same location. When fully operational, Hanover Veneer will create about 28 jobs within the mill, in addition to other spinoff benefits in the local economy.

The McGuinty government has committed over \$1 billion in various programs over five years to increase the competitiveness of Ontario's forest industry. The forest sector prosperity fund and loan guarantee program has leveraged over \$742 million in new private sector investment. This is yet another example of how this govern-

ment continues to make investments in sustainability and building a strong economy for the future.

1310

#### DISASTER RELIEF

**Mr. Jim Wilson:** Over a month ago in this House, the Deputy Premier, George Smitherman, said in response to my question regarding assistance for apple growers who were severely affected by the August 20 tornado in the Town of the Blue Mountains, that he would work with the agriculture minister and me to come up with a solution for our apple growers. Well, a lot of time has passed since then, and as it stands today, two months after the tornado, the farmers haven't received anything. It's estimated that up to \$4 million in damage was done that may not be covered by existing programs.

To date, it has been left up to me and the Ontario Fruit and Vegetable Growers' Association to assess the damage and put a value on it. The government promised to do it weeks ago, and to date nobody has come to confirm the apple growers' losses. All Agricorp did was speak to the farmers and tell them what they could have, or should have, received if they were enrolled in its programs. They didn't document the growers' financial losses, as was promised by the government.

The Liberal government has said all the right things, but there's no action behind their words. Two ministers have come up and toured the damage, posed for photos and gotten themselves on the evening news, but they've done absolutely nothing to actually help, despite assurances from them that they would help.

There is a real need for assistance in the Town of the Blue Mountains. It takes up to nine years for an apple tree to come back and be profitable after it is planted. So I call upon the government to keep their promises to help, get down to work and get money flowing to these apple growers.

#### SCHOOL BREAKFAST PROGRAM

**Mr. Mario Sergio:** Just recently, the Toronto Foundation for Student Success was in my riding of York West to promote nutrition programs in our schools and bring awareness to their new partnership with Breakfast Clubs of Canada. This exciting partnership will help support more than 600 nutritional programs across the city, and will ensure that our most vulnerable students receive a healthy breakfast each day before they begin their classes.

I'm happy to report that Emery Collegiate, C.W. Jefferys and Westview Centennial, three high schools within York West, were presented with grants this month to maintain their breakfast programs. This partnership and the funding it brings will go a long way to improve student learning in our schools.

I would like to thank Breakfast Clubs of Canada for raising awareness and financial support for this great cause. I would also like to thank the Toronto Foundation

for Student Success for continuing their advocacy for students across the city of Toronto as they continue promoting the importance of nutrition in our schools. I also would like to thank Minister Best and the Ontario government for recognizing and supporting the Toronto Foundation for Student Success breakfast club.

#### SMALL BUSINESS

**Mrs. Amrit Mangat:** I stand today to acknowledge October as Small Business Month. Every October, the government of Ontario recognizes the achievements of entrepreneurs and small businesses across Ontario.

Small businesses in Ontario account for 97% of firms. In my riding of Mississauga–Brampton South, these are businesses like Enjo Canada, which drive the local economy and create jobs. Small businesses contribute to Ontario's diverse, innovative and globally competitive economy, and while we celebrate Small Business Month, their efforts are felt all year round.

As part of Ontario's competitive tax reform package to make Ontario more competitive, small businesses will have a tax cut of about 17% and the small business surtax will be eliminated. We need to do whatever it takes to strengthen our economy and create new jobs. When businesses succeed, Ontario succeeds.

So I salute small businesses and say thank you to all the small business operators across the province who are generating wealth and making our communities and this province prosperous to live in.

#### ISLAMIC HISTORY MONTH

**Mr. Yasir Naqvi:** I'm honoured to rise today and share with my colleagues and all Ontarians that October is Islamic History Month in Canada. I would like to welcome and thank the members of the community who have come today to exhibit and discuss the important role Islamic society has played in our history. I commend them for their efforts to build bridges of understanding, mutual discovery and appreciation between Canadian Muslims and Canadians of all beliefs.

Throughout this month, communities across this country will celebrate and share the diversity and rich history of Muslim civilization, with activities, exhibitions, lectures, book fairs, documentary films and, best of all, an opportunity to learn about such an important part of history and our own Canadian fabric. Islamic culture and Muslim individuals have profoundly influenced and advanced the arts, sciences, medicine, architecture, humanities, music, philosophy and spirituality, both today and over thousands of years.

This year, Islamic History Month Canada is celebrating its third year on the theme of Islamic finance, which is a timely topic. Islamic financial principles rest on the balanced allocation of money and the absence of interest. For example, Islamic mortgage holders pay rent rather than interest, and banks must match loans with deposits, charging fees rather than interest to pay for their services.

Also integral to Islamic financial values is the Zakat, whereby Muslims offer 2.5% of their wealth for charity, to share their good fortune with the community and those in need. We might take a moment to consider what this large and growing financial model has to teach us in this time of financial challenge.

Again, I would like to thank the Muslim community of Ontario for their hard work, and I encourage all Ontarians to take a few moments this October to learn about the important contributions of Islam to our history, culture and daily lives.

#### PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** I beg to inform the House that pursuant to standing order 98(c), a change has been made to the order of precedence on the ballot list for private members' public business such that Mr. Hillier assumes ballot item number 47 and Mrs. Witmer assumes ballot item number 59.

#### REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

##### STANDING COMMITTEE ON GENERAL GOVERNMENT

**Ms. Helena Jaczek:** I beg leave to present a report from the Standing Committee on General Government and move its adoption.

**The Clerk-at-the-Table (Ms. Tonia Grannum):** Your committee begs to report the following bill as amended:

Bill 191, An Act with respect to land use planning and protection in the Far North / Projet de loi 191, Loi relative à l'aménagement et à la protection du Grand Nord.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Shall the report be received and adopted? Agreed? Agreed.

*Report adopted.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Pursuant to standing order 74(b), the bill is therefore ordered for second reading.

#### INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

##### 1105481 ONTARIO INC. ACT, 2009

Mr. Kular moved first reading of the following bill:  
Bill Pr28, An Act to revive 1105481 Ontario Inc.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

*First reading agreed to.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Pursuant to standing order 86, this bill is referred to the Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills.

#### STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

**Mr. Norman W. Sterling:** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker: It has become apparent that all of the government members have copies of this statement, but that that hospitality—

*Interjections.*

**Mr. Norman W. Sterling:** Well, you're passing them around right now. I would like the same advantage as other members of the Legislature, Mr. Speaker.

**1320**

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** This is a ministerial statement—for example, unlike a budget—so it's only required that copies be provided to the critics of the opposition, but it's my understanding that copies are going to be made available.

*Interjections.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** I'm told copies are available in your lobby. Are we all set? Just so that we understand, it's different than a budget distribution.

Minister of Finance.

##### ECONOMIC OUTLOOK AND FISCAL REVIEW

##### PERSPECTIVES ÉCONOMIQUES ET REVUE FINANCIÈRE

**Hon. Dwight Duncan:** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to present the 2009 Ontario economic outlook and fiscal review.

In the past year, the recession has had a significant impact on the global economy—and on Ontario.

Many jurisdictions are facing sharp declines in revenues and increasing expenses as people turn to governments for support.

Notre mission à l'heure actuelle est claire : créer des emplois, aider les familles et mettre en place les conditions propices à une nouvelle ère de croissance économique.

Our plan to confront the challenge of this global recession, as outlined in the 2009 budget, was and continues to be the right plan for the times.

Like governments all over the world, we have taken firm action. We are investing in infrastructure, in skills training and in reshaping our tax system, all to ensure that we are ready for growth.

We have spent the last six years making steady progress rebuilding our public services and now we must turn our attention to sustaining them.

Mr. Speaker, today I will update you on the province's economic outlook and fiscal circumstances.

The global downturn continues to dramatically impact families, businesses and governments.

The global recession has been severe and widespread. According to the International Monetary Fund, world trade is contracting by 11.9% this year.

Economies all over the world have contracted, some far more dramatically than ours. The United States and Europe saw striking declines. Both India and China saw notable slowdowns.

Based on the best available advice, we project a decline of 3.5% in Ontario's real GDP in 2009, followed by modest gains of 2% in 2010 and 3% in 2011. Our planning assumptions are more conservative than the average private sector forecasts.

As of the second quarter of 2009, Ontario's real GDP was 5% below its pre-recession peak.

Due to the global recession, our economy is now the same size as it was in 2005.

Tax revenues are also now at 2005 levels.

As we recently reported in the public accounts, corporate tax revenues last year fell by an unprecedented 48.1%, or over \$6 billion.

At the same time, the recession has driven up demand for government services.

More people rely on social assistance. More people require skills training. More people go back to college and university. More people rely on health care services. During a downturn, people depend more heavily on those public services.

Growth in jobs and government revenue generally lags growth in the economy. It takes time to fully recover from a recessionary period.

Other jurisdictions face all of these challenges just as we do. But Ontario had another distinct challenge and an opportunity.

Ontario's auto industry employs hundreds of thousands of people. In fact, more cars are built in Ontario than in any other state or province in North America.

Because of that very fact, the McGuinty government took action: We provided \$4 billion to keep people working all over Ontario and to maintain our leadership in the sector—not just in the manufacturing business, but in auto parts, at auto dealers and in auto repair shops all across Ontario.

It is worth noting that Ontario is the only subnational jurisdiction in North America to have participated in the auto support plan.

Deficits have increased sharply in the world's leading economies. Furthermore, as the impact of the recession becomes clearer, governments have updated their estimates of the size of deficits over the past few months.

The US deficit is almost \$1.5 trillion. Our federal government is acknowledging a deficit of \$56 billion this year, rather than the surplus it projected just a year ago.

Almost all other Canadian provinces are forecasting larger deficits this year. The economic downturn has had a very negative impact on all of us.

Alberta is facing deficits for the first time in 15 years.

The governments of Canada, the United States and some other provinces have all recently adjusted their deficit projections upward for this year.

Due to the impact of the global economy on Ontario and our government's desire to invest in the people of

this province, the projected deficit is \$24.7 billion in 2009-10.

En raison des répercussions de l'économie mondiale sur l'Ontario et du désir de notre gouvernement d'investir dans les habitants de la province, le déficit prévu s'élève à 24,7 \$ milliards en 2009-2010.

The deficit for 2009-10 is consistent with the size of Ontario's economy, relative to the Canadian economy—and generally consistent, proportionally, to the federal government's deficit.

In recent months, we have seen signs of economic recovery.

Financial markets have started to stabilize; equity markets and housing markets have improved.

According to the most recent available statistics, Ontario's international exports increased in June, July and August.

And most importantly, Ontario's labour market has shown modest job gains in each of the past four months.

Though these signs are positive, the impact of the global economic recession is still considerable. Household wealth and consumer confidence are below pre-recessionary levels. Retail sales are still down.

The risks to economic recovery are real. Just in the past few weeks, the Canadian dollar has risen dramatically. Oil prices can also fluctuate, as we've seen recently. Rapidly rising interest rates could also be a further challenge to our economy, should that occur. The speed of the US recovery will have an impact on our growth as well.

As always, government revenues trail economic performance, so it could be some time before economic growth restores revenues to pre-recession levels.

And we know full well that in communities across Ontario, like in communities around the world, unemployment remains too high.

In the near term, we must continue to invest in job creation, in infrastructure, in skills training. Mr. Speaker, we will continue to invest in the people of Ontario.

At the first signs of an economic slowdown, almost two years ago, the McGuinty government took immediate action to lessen the impact on Ontario families by helping to retain jobs and services.

This year and next, we are investing \$32.5 billion in infrastructure. A new laboratory is under way at the University of Toronto in Mississauga and Highway 17 in Kenora is being improved, to name just two examples. Shovels are in the ground and people are at work on over 650 projects right across Ontario.

We invested in the auto sector to keep people working.

And we're investing in training. Summer job programs this year helped more than 104,000 young people find employment. Over one million Ontarians have accessed our skills training programs. Our Second Career program alone has already surpassed its targets by helping almost 21,000 people retrain for jobs in very high-demand careers.

**1330**

In the 2009 budget, the McGuinty government continued to demonstrate its commitment to the most vulnerable, particularly during the economic slowdown. The Ontario child benefit program was accelerated to \$1,100 this year, two years ahead of schedule. We also increased social assistance rates for the fifth time since 2003.

Our government made a conscious decision to follow the IMF's advice to invest 2% to 3% of GDP in stimulus, as other countries and provinces have done.

Our focus has been on positioning Ontario for long-term growth.

The single most important thing we can do to make Ontario's economy more competitive is to modernize our tax system. Our proposed tax cuts and the harmonized sales tax would give our businesses and families an important advantage in the global economy. The marginal effective tax rate on income from new business investment would be cut in half—sending a strong signal that Ontario is ready for new business growth.

At the same time, 93% of Ontarians would get a permanent income tax cut. Our most modest income earners would have the lowest provincial income tax rate in Canada.

Le train de mesures fiscales que nous proposons améliorera certainement la situation de l'Ontario. Il would create jobs, attract new business in this province and sharply improve our competitive advantage.

Our modernized tax system would be more progressive and would better position Ontario for growth. It would reduce Ontario tax revenue by \$2.3 billion over four years, an essential and timely investment in our future.

These and other measures introduced in the 2009 Ontario budget are helping families weather the global economic storm and prepare for solid economic growth as we emerge from the recession.

Ontario, along with most other jurisdictions around the world, is running a deficit in order to preserve and create jobs and establish a stronger economy after the recession.

Ontarians know that this is the right course during tough economic times.

In our 2009 budget we made the right choices for today.

As Ontario comes out of the recession, we will eliminate the deficit and pay down debt to ensure the sustainability of the public services that we all value.

Today marks the beginning of a journey that will lead to the development of our next budget. We are now launching a broad consultation with Ontarians about how best to sustain public services.

The treasury board will begin a comprehensive review of service delivery. It will provide a plan to return the province to a sustainable and firmer fiscal footing with balanced budgets, while protecting key services.

The treasury board's plan will be part of the 2010 budget.

That is just our first step. In the coming months and years, we will change how we do business in this

province. We will become a leaner and more efficient provider of quality public services.

Ontario has the second-lowest program expense per capita among all Canadian jurisdictions. We are doing well, but we need to do more.

We will call on our partners in the public and broader public sectors to help us sustain public services in the long term. We will also review all agencies, boards and commissions to ensure they are meeting Ontarians' needs and expectations.

It is incumbent upon all of us to participate in this vital conversation—to help us build consensus on how to manage through this challenge.

We will report on our plan to return the province to balance in the 2010 budget.

Nous traiterons de notre plan visant à rétablir l'équilibre budgétaire de la province dans le budget de 2010.

This won't be easy and it will take time. Working together, we can get it done.

In the coming months, we will also continue to focus on our key priorities—the priorities most important to Ontarians: job creation, health care and education.

Education is, and always has been, one of the McGuinty government's core priorities.

We are dedicated to continually improving education in this province. That is why, later this month, Premier McGuinty will make an announcement about phasing in full-day early learning for Ontario's four- and five-year-olds.

This initiative will further increase the competitive advantage already found in our highly skilled and educated workforce.

Full-day learning for our four- and five-year-olds will also help parents take advantage of new job opportunities.

Making this investment will require difficult choices, and we'll make them.

Our government will balance the commitment to maintain public services while securing a strong and sustainable fiscal footing for Ontario.

That is our task, and we look forward to it.

I have every confidence that Ontario will come through this recession wiser, more efficient, more competitive, stronger and ready for economic growth.

Je suis persuadé que l'Ontario sortira de la récession plus averti, plus efficient, plus compétitif et plus fort, et que son économie sera prête pour la prochaine ère de croissance.

We have the fundamentals in place: a highly skilled workforce, a strong education system and a passion for innovation.

We can and we will compete globally on the basis of our unique strengths.

As a result, this will always be a province where the standard of living is high and where each and every one of us has a real opportunity to succeed.

When we come out of this recession—and we will—Ontario will be bigger, Ontario will be better and Ontario will be stronger.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Responses?

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** Now it's official: Canada's worst government is now running Canada's worst deficit. A \$25-billion deficit represents a historically dismal performance, and this minister and this Premier should be ashamed about their performance and what they've done to the province of Ontario.

Yesterday, I pointed out that Dalton McGuinty had already piled up some \$53 billion worth of debt onto the backs of Ontario families. That translated into \$11,000 of new debt for every single household in the province of Ontario. And now we know that Dalton McGuinty's debt is even worse than that \$53 billion; it is a shameful \$65.2 billion in increased debts on the backs of families. That translates into \$13,500 on the backs of every single household in our great province, a massive new debt burden on families whose household finances are already stretched to the limit.

How could things get so bad so fast? Yes, we're in a recession, but even the finance minister admitted in his speech that Ontario was hit earlier, fell harder and fell faster than anywhere else. I wonder if the Premier ever asked himself whose fault that might be.

Good times hid a fact that bad times have now revealed—that this government has taken a path of unsustainable spending based upon phony expectations of the economy. Nobody should be surprised that Dalton McGuinty's house of cards has finally come tumbling down.

1340

This deficit is not the McGuinty government's problem. It is proof that the McGuinty government is the problem. That is why this problem will not get fixed until we replace this sad, worn-out McGuinty government.

I'm sure you'll recall, Mr. Speaker, the McGuinty government raised business taxes in its first year, taxes that killed jobs and crippled Ontario's competitive—

*Interjections.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Order, member for Municipal Affairs and Housing.

**Mr. Tim Hudak:** They imposed Dalton McGuinty's so-called health tax, the largest income tax in Ontario's history, and coming this summer they are planning to one-up themselves and impose the largest sales tax greedy grab ever in the history of our province.

How can this government, which imposed new taxes so rapidly, so regularly and with such relish, still manage to squander this revenue and still pile up the most debt in Ontario's history? No doubt, to raise taxes so massively but still pile up such massive amounts of debt is a once-in-a-generation example of gross incompetence.

As the architect of the largest tax increase and largest debt increase in Ontario's history, Dalton McGuinty's time as Premier is already, sadly, one for the history books.

Let's put to rest any notion that this government will ever introduce any meaningful spending restraint. Dalton McGuinty remains hard-wired to higher taxes and higher

spending. In just six years, this government jacked up spending by 60% when our economy only grew by 7%. While middle-class families are paying higher income taxes, higher fees, higher auto insurance premiums and higher hydro bills, and spending less time with their families, the government was living high on the hog and has piled up a massive debt burden on the backs of Ontario families.

It is clear the McGuinty government has lost touch with where this money originated from. Hard-pressed families now find themselves saddled with \$13,500 each worth of Dalton McGuinty's debt. Clearly, after six years in office, the only way forward is to change this government and change this tired Premier, and we look forward to that battle ahead.

*Interjections.*

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** I can stand here all afternoon.

Responses? The member for Beaches—East York.

**Mr. Michael Prue:** Since this Parliament resumed, I have waited in anticipation for this day to see exactly where this government was going to go. I have watched, though, in trepidation and fear these last few weeks. Over the last few weeks, it's been very brutal to the people of Ontario. It's been brutal to the children's aid societies that have come before the Legislature and before the committees and said that they just don't have enough money to do what they're mandated to do. It's been brutal for the unemployed who have come to my office, and I'm sure all of our offices, because the training programs upon which they were hoping to rely are no longer available and will not be available until next year. It has been brutal to the people in small-town and northern Ontario who see their hospitals closing, where they have to travel further and further to get the health care they need.

Over the past few weeks, we have seen as well unfold the whole fiasco of eHealth. We've seen unfold the whole fiasco of the \$1-million-a-day addiction of the McGuinty government to private consultants, as the money gets passed out and passed out and passed out, with little or no control.

Over the past few weeks we've also seen the unfolding of I think the greatest fiasco of all, and that will be when consumers pick up the entire tab and businesses get the entire reward for HST.

I listened today to see whether there were going to be any changes, whether the government has learned anything at all over what has happened. I'm very sorry, but I don't see the change that we all know needs to happen.

Today we look at who is going to be hurt. We look at the civil service. I can read the code words. I can see what treasury board is going to do. I can see how we're going to be leaner and meaner. You all know what that means. That means that the people who work hard for us, who are the heart and soul of Ontario, the people who are our civil servants, are going to suffer. There are going to be fewer of them, and I see the whole possibility of Dalton days on the horizon.

As well, what about the HST? The minister stands today and crows about how this is central to the government's recovery plan. But it is not part of the solution; it is part of the problem. Ordinary people across Ontario will tell you they fear what is going to happen, and they know they are going to be the ones who will lose in the end. There was not a single word about eHealth or about consultants' fees in this entire document or in what the minister said—absolutely silent. It appears that the government has not learned a single lesson, nor are they taking any avenues to change all of that.

But what I'm more worried about is what is happening to ordinary Ontarians out there. I've talked about the public employees: the very real prospect I put to them today of Dalton days, the real prospect of layoffs, the very real prospect of them, over the years, having to do more and more with less and less. And I talked to a minister just last week who complained that in her former ministry they went from 12,000 employees to 3,000 and can no longer do what she was hoping they could do. I'm looking to see even more of that in the future.

There was not a single word in this entire thing about the poverty program. This was to have been the poverty Premier who was committed to do something. The only thing that was said was that they have kept up with inflation for the last six years; there had been an 11% increase. That is precisely the inflation rate over those same six years. They are no better off today than they were in the deepest, darkest days of the government before. There's not a word about what they are going to do to actually improve the lives of the 140,000 children who go to bed hungry every night.

There's nothing about children's aid and what you're going to be doing for them, who have the most crucial job to do for the most vulnerable children in this province. There's nothing in here about programs to assist the weak, the vulnerable, the infirm and the old. There's nothing in here, or any commitment to do that at all.

There's nothing here about post-secondary education and our students, who are absolutely struggling—nothing at all in what the minister said here today. And there's no mention at all about the environment; I thought that was a key platform of this government as well.

What we have here today is more of the same old same old. The same things we've watched unfold since this Parliament resumed. The same things about eHealth and consultants—a government that lost its way—and absolutely no new plans that are going to help ordinary people. They can expect to get whacked out there in the months ahead.

## PETITIONS

### TAXATION

**Mr. Jim Wilson:** A petition regarding the new provincial sales tax, the HST:

“Whereas the hard-working residents of Simcoe–Grey do not want a harmonized sales tax (HST) that will raise the cost of goods and services they use every day; and

“Whereas the 13% blended sales tax will cause everyone to pay more for, to name just a few, gasoline for their cars, heat, telephone, cable and Internet services for their homes, house sales over \$400,000, fast food under \$4, electricity, newspapers, magazines, stamps, theatre admissions, footwear less than \$30, home renovations, gym fees, audio books for the blind, funeral services, snow-throwing, air conditioning repairs, commercial property rentals, real estate commissions, dry cleaning, car washes, manicures, Energy Star appliances, veterinarian bills, bus fares, golf fees, arena ice rentals, moving vans, grass cutting, furnace repairs, domestic air travel, train fares, tobacco, bicycles and legal services; and

“Whereas the blended sales tax will affect everyone in the province: seniors, students, families and low-income Ontarians;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“That the McGuinty Liberal government not increase taxes for Ontario consumers.”

I want to thank Cathy Scott, Wasaga Beach, for sending this petition, which I will sign.

1350

### TOM LONGBOAT

**Mr. Jim Brownell:** I have a petition in support of the Tom Longboat Day Act, and it reads as follows:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas Tom Longboat is Canada's greatest long-distance runner; and

“Whereas Tom Longboat is a great role model for all Canadians;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to pass the Tom Longboat Day Act into law so that we can honour this remarkable athlete and courageous Canadian, who is a great role model to all Canadians.”

I support this petition and I shall sign it and send it to the clerks' table.

### HOSPITAL FUNDING

**Mr. Norm Miller:** I have a petition to save the Burk's Falls and District Health Centre, signed by 6,700 people. It reads:

“Whereas the Almaguin has an aging population level higher than the Ontario average and our local hospital services are vital to our community's economy; and

“Whereas past records of the Burk's Falls and District Health Centre indicate that an average of 8,000 to 10,000 clients per year are treated in the urgent care clinic and patients face longer waits at the Muskoka Algonquin Healthcare services ... emergency room if our urgent care centre is closed; and

"Whereas the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care ... has struck a task force whose mandate is to develop a rural health care policy;

"Therefore, be it resolved that the Ontario government stop the cuts to and maintain the existing hospital services, including our inpatient beds, urgent care centre, lab, diabetes education, and publicly funded physiotherapy;

"Be it further resolved that the Ontario government call a moratorium on further changes at the Burk's Falls and District Health Centre until the MOHLTC task force has completed the proposed rural health care policy;

"Be it further resolved that the task force come to Burk's Falls for public consultation on the future of our local hospital and health services."

I've signed this petition, as I support it, and now pass it on to Henry.

#### IDENTITY THEFT

**Mr. Tony Ruprecht:** I have another petition which has to do with identity theft and I'm delighted to read it to this Parliament. It is addressed to the Minister of Government Services:

"Whereas identity theft is the fastest-growing crime in North America;

"Whereas confidential and private information is being stolen on a regular basis, affecting literally thousands of people;

"Whereas the cost of this crime exceeds billions of dollars;

"Whereas countless hours are wasted to restore one's good credit rating;

"We, the undersigned, demand that Bill 38, which passed the second reading unanimously in the Ontario Legislature on December 8 ... be brought before committee and that the following issues be included for consideration and debate:

"(1) All consumer reports should be provided in a truncated (masked-out) form, protecting our vital private information such as SIN and credit card numbers.

"(2) Should a credit bureau discover that there has been a breach of consumer information, the agency should immediately inform the victimized consumer.

"(3) Credit bureaus should only report inquiries resulting out of actual applications for credit and for no other reasons.

"(4) Credit bureaus should investigate any complaints within 30 days and correct or automatically delete any information found unconfirmed or inaccurate."

Since I agree with this petition, I'm delighted to sign it.

#### SALE OF DOMESTIC WINES AND BEERS

**Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer:** I have here a petition signed by more than 6,000 Ontarians and it's been submitted by the Ontario-Korean Businessmen's Association.

"Whereas the province of Ontario restricts the sale of beer and wine to the LCBO, a few winery retail stores and the Beer Store, and the three large beer companies are owned by multinationals;

"Whereas other provinces (notably Quebec) have been selling beer and wine in local convenience stores for many years without any harm to the well-being of the public;

"Whereas it is desirable to promote the sale of beer and wine in a convenient manner consistent with a contemporary society;

"Whereas it is essential to support local convenience stores for the survival of small businesses;

"Whereas it is obvious from the current market trends that the sales of wine and beer in convenience stores is not a question of 'if' but of 'when';

"We, the undersigned, hereby petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to amend the Liquor Control Act to permit the sale of beer and wine in local convenience stores to the public throughout the province and to do it now."

#### CEMETERIES

**Mr. Jim Brownell:** I have a petition, and I'm delighted to see Rob Levery of the Ontario Historical Society's name on it. It reads as follows:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas protecting and preserving Ontario's cemeteries is a shared responsibility and the foundation of a civilized society; and

"Whereas failure to safeguard one of our last remaining authentic cultural heritage resources, Ontario's inactive cemeteries, would be disastrous for the continuity of the historical record and our collective culture in this province;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"The government must pass Bill 149, the Inactive Cemeteries Protection Act, 2009, to prohibit the re-location of inactive cemeteries in the province of Ontario."

As I agree with this petition, I shall sign it and send it to the clerks' table.

#### SCHOOL TRANSPORTATION

**Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer:** I have here petitions with several hundred signatures.

"Whereas the Ontario Ministry of Education, in collaboration with the school boards of Ontario, is entertaining or proceeding with a request for proposal ... to obtain transportation services, with the intention of eliminating the current process; and

"Whereas this concept strongly favours large international operators who are in a position to underbid local, small, existing, independent operations; and

"Whereas independent school bus operators form an integral part of the communities in which they operate

and contribute to the social and economic well-being of the community; and

“Whereas local school bus operators support other local businesses such as insurance brokers, gas station operators, farming operations, financial institutions, retail outlets and professional services such as dentists, chiropractors and doctors; and

“Whereas school boards already utilize a procurement process where they set the price for school bus services, and this process has proven to be cost-effective; and

“Whereas the outcome of the RFP pilot projects have proven that local bus operators will lose their routes in an RFP process based on price first and quality second; and

“Whereas the experience in other jurisdictions has proven that, while there may be a short-term cost savings to an RFP process, in the long run the process reduces competition and costs eventually go up when there are only one or two large operators left to tender;

“Therefore, be it resolved that the undersigned Ontario parents, students, community leaders, education professionals and business owners call on the Ontario government to address the concerns of the Independent School Bus Operators Association (ISBOA), abandon the RFP process, and adopt a process that ensures small and medium-sized school bus companies continue to be able to do business in their communities.”

I'm pleased to sign this.

#### DIABETES TREATMENT

**Mr. Tony Ruprecht:** I have a petition that has to do with school-aged children and blood sugar monitoring, and it reads as follows:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas elementary school-aged children in the province of Ontario suffering from diabetes require regular blood sugar monitoring and may also require insulin and glucagon to manage their disease; and

“Whereas there is no medical or nursing assistance readily available in schools as there was in the past; and

“Whereas the parents/guardians of these children must currently visit their child's school several times throughout the day in order to test their child's blood sugar levels; and

“Whereas the absence of medical support in our elementary schools results in substantial stress and disruption to the lives of children and their working parents;

“We, the undersigned, hereby petition the Parliament of Ontario as follows:

“(1) That elementary schools in the province of Ontario have on-site staff trained in the daily monitoring of blood sugar levels of children who suffer from diabetes; and

“(2) That the trained staff also administer insulin and glucagon when required, with the consent of the child's parent/guardian.”

I'm delighted to sign this petition because I agree with it 100%.

1400

#### CEMETERIES

**Mr. Jim Brownell:** I have a petition signed by a number of Ontarians from Dunnville, Caledonia and Hagersville. It reads as follows:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas Ontario's cemeteries are an important part of our cultural heritage, and Ontario's inactive cemeteries are constantly at risk of closure and removal; and

“Ontario's cemeteries are an irreplaceable part of the province's cultural heritage;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“The government must pass Bill 149, the Inactive Cemeteries Protection Act, 2009, to prohibit the relocation of inactive cemeteries in the province of Ontario.”

As I agree with this petition I shall sign it and send it to the clerks' table.

#### RAIL LINE CONSTRUCTION

**Mr. Tony Ruprecht:** Mr. Speaker, thank you very much that you continue to listen to these petitions, but they are very important. This one has to do with GO Transit, that is now part of Metrolinx. It reads as follows:

“We, the undersigned residents, draw attention to the parties listed to the following events:

“That the construction project, specifically the piling or pile-driving around the West Toronto Diamond junction, is invasive to residents and businesses;

“That many people are distraught and have suffered physical and mental ailments due to construction;

“That sound and intense low vibrations have displaced residents from their homes during the day and displaced multiple businesses;

“That the noise is harmful to infants and children outside and people who are ill or caring for children cannot stay at home during the day;

“That duplicates of home inspections are being withheld from homeowners and businesses by order of the construction company in charge;

“That people who live in the community speak many languages and have not been given adequate information or information in their language to help them advocate on their own behalf in terms of damage to their place of residence, loss of income, or related emotional and physical stress;

“That home inspections are only being offered to residents within a certain radius of the construction site but many outside that radius are still greatly affected;

“That there exists a less invasive method of piling, as recommended in an environmental assessment of the area in 2007;

“Therefore, your petitioners call upon the above respected parties in the Parliament of Ontario to immediately halt construction of the West Diamond joint

venture project until acceptable methods are implemented.”

And I’m sending this petition to you with Rushabh.

### CEMETERIES

**Mr. Jim Brownell:** I have a petition signed by a number of Ontarians stretching from Owen Sound, Toronto, to Kingston and it reads as follows.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas protecting and preserving Ontario’s cemeteries is a shared responsibility and the foundation of a civilized society; and

“Whereas failure to safeguard one of our last remaining authentic cultural heritage resources, Ontario’s inactive cemeteries, would be disastrous for the continuity of the historical record and our collective culture in this province;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“The government must pass Bill 149, the Inactive Cemeteries Protection Act, 2009, to prohibit the relocation of inactive cemeteries in the province of Ontario.”

As I agree with this petition, I shall sign it and send it to the clerks’ table.

### PRIVATE MEMBERS’ PUBLIC BUSINESS

#### ONTARIO COLLEGE OF TRADES

**Mr. Robert Bailey:** I move that, in the opinion of this House, if Bill 183, the Ontario College of Trades and Apprenticeship Act, 2009 passes as written, no representative of corporations or trade unions that made donations to Working Families shall be appointed as members of the board of the college of trades.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Mr. Bailey has moved private members’ notice of motion number 113.

Pursuant to standing order 98, Mr. Bailey, you have up to 12 minutes.

**Mr. Robert Bailey:** As you know, the House is currently waiting for the government to call for third reading of Bill 183, the college of trades act. Our party is concerned that the government is going to use the college of trades to pay back trade unions and others who provided resources to the Working Families Coalition, which our party believes was nothing —

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Mr. Bailey, you might want to withdraw what you said and perhaps rephrase it.

**Mr. Robert Bailey:** —is going to use the college of trades to reward trade unions and others who provided resources to working families, which our party believes is nothing more than an advertising front for the Liberal

Party of Ontario. I think everyone needs to be reminded just what role Working Families has played in the last couple of elections in Ontario. In 2007, Working Families ran a \$5-million advertising campaign supporting the current government. According to the Toronto Star, 88% of the funding came from organizations supported by this organization.

During the election and since, our party has contended that Working Families was nothing but a front organization run by the McGuinty Liberals as a way to get around election financing laws. As members know, parties are limited to what they can spend; however, third parties are not. A third party group can spend what they want, and they gave the Liberals a huge advantage in the last two campaigns.

The people behind Working Families were all former key McGuinty campaign aides. Mr. Marcel Weider’s company, Arrow Communications, was working both for the Liberal party of Ontario and Working Families. Mr. Weider was publicly identified as a consultant working for Working Families, helping them to develop their communications strategy.

Now, it’s worth pointing out that according to the public accounts, this company has made out pretty good as well. As a matter of fact, Arrow was a supplier to the Ontario Liberal caucus and the government of Ontario in each fiscal year.

Another publicly identified key resource for Working Families was Pollara Inc. Actually, according to the Daily Commercial News, Pollara was one of the three firms that created and coordinated the communications strategy for the coalition. Again, according to the public accounts of Ontario, Pollara has been a supplier to the Liberal caucus and the government of Ontario. Some of those stats are as follows: In 2003, it was retained by the coalition to provide public opinion services. The Daily Commercial News identified Pollara as one of the three firms that created and coordinated this research starting in 2003. Jodi Shanoff, a vice-president of public affairs, was also identified as a key strategist for the coalition.

The Working Families Coalition helped tremendously in the election of the McGuinty Liberals in 2003. Unfortunately for the taxpayers of Ontario, that mere \$5 million that the Working Families Coalition sponsors invested in 2003 has been paid back many times over to the sponsors, using your tax dollars, ladies and gentlemen.

As Ian Urquhart of The Toronto Star noted, all of the sponsors of the Working Families Coalition “have reasons to be thankful to the governing Liberals for either increasing spending in their area or changing laws and regulations to their liking.”

Just who are these Working Family Coalition sponsors? On the Working Families Coalition website there are nine unions who were the official sponsors of Working Families, and there are three non-construction unions: the Ontario English Catholic Teachers’ Association, the Canadian Auto Workers and the Ontario Secondary School Teachers’ Federation. The remaining five unions

were linked through the Ontario Building Trades and Construction Council, commonly referred to as the building trades. Those are the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, the millwrights, the International Union of Operating Engineers, painters district council 46 and the Ontario Pipe Trades Council.

What have the trades received? Well, Pat Dillon, the spokesperson for Working Families, is also the business manager of the Ontario Building Trades. Pat Dillon said, "The building trades have done exceptionally well with the Ontario Liberals since 2003." He also, incidentally, is now a member of the board of directors of the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board. Some other benefits received by these construction unions include a skilled training infrastructure program of \$25 million in 2007.

Union-run skills training centres are very different from the community college training centres. The community colleges are open to all Ontarians. The union-run training halls, however, exclude all Ontarians except those belonging to that union. Regardless of this fact, in 2007 the government of Ontario bestowed the building trades union and affiliated trade centres with some \$25 million from this program.

Bill 144, the Labour Relations Statute Law Amendment: The McGuinty government introduced and adopted this bill with scarcely any consultation, and it provided the building trades with significant new advantages in the certification process that are in direct contrast with the McGuinty Liberals' promise to fix the "democratic deficit" in this province.

#### 1410

These new powers have resulted in a number of certifications that probably would not have occurred under the old rule. In addition, Bill 144 did not address two significant problems, of which the government is aware, that continue to give construction unions unfair advantages over the working lives of construction workers who have not chosen to join a trade union.

The "non-construction employer" definition: The McGuinty government continues to allow municipalities, retailers and other companies that are clearly not in the construction industry to be certified by these unions by a very narrow interpretation of the "non-construction employer" definition. This results in a situation where two employees, for example, on a municipal job site can get a construction union certification in place so that thousands of employees who do not belong to a trade union are prohibited from working on that municipality's project. This drives up construction prices to municipalities, such as the city of Toronto, by hundreds of millions of dollars every year.

The timing of the application: The McGuinty Liberals did not fix the procedural ruling of the labour board that uses the number of employees working on the date of the certification as the basis for determining union support. They knew that if they filed an application on a day when a job site is short-staffed and when enough of those employees have signed membership cards, the board will not consider the wishes of the tens or even hundreds of

employees who may have worked the day before the application or the day after. This is undemocratic and not in the public's best interest, yet the McGuinty Liberals did nothing to correct it.

The Canadian Federation of Independent Business said at the time Bill 144 was passed that "the government has shown that it is more concerned with paying back its union buddies than in developing sound public policy that would bolster economic growth."

Since the 2007 election, this government has continued to show that it is willing to say thank you for that \$5 million worth of advertising that the Working Families Coalition put up for them. Instead of fixing problems with the WSIB, this government made it mandatory for all executive officers of any construction company, small or large, to get WSIB coverage at an estimated cost, as I remember the numbers from the debate, of \$11,000 per business—which, during this time of recession, is going to be a very big impediment on any business.

Why are we concerned about Bill 183 being used as a way to reward Working Families? Well, Bill 183, the college of trades act, is designed to ensure quality training for our tradespeople. In order for the college to be effective, the government has given broad powers and a broad mandate to modernize these trades. Our long-standing position on this side of the House, as a party, has been, over time, to reduce the ratio of apprentices to journeypersons from three to one, to one to one as in many other jurisdictions. The college has been given the authority to do this if they feel it is necessary.

We believe that by reducing this apprenticeship ratio to where it's warranted, we will be able to have a highly skilled workforce that we need to compete in today's global economy. In fact, during some debates on this in committee, a number of employers came forward and said that they would like to hire people but they can't because they can't get enough journeypersons to put on the job to staff it. And a number of people who wanted to work—young people—also approached us and said that they were unable to obtain employment because of these ratios.

The construction trades have long defended the higher apprentice-to-journeyperson ratio, and if they are the only ones put in charge of the college of trades, the chances of changing this ratio would probably be greatly reduced.

I'm going to read a letter that our party submitted. We also had some concerns with Elections Ontario, and we did request an investigation of the Liberal Party campaign spending through its agent, the Working Families Coalition. I won't read the whole letter—my time is limited—but a summary, and relief sought:

"There is strong"—and I know the members opposite will want to hear this—"prima facie evidence that the coalition is not a third party and is more accurately described as an agent acting on behalf of the Ontario Liberal Party. As such, these activities and advertising expenditures of the coalition during the 2003 election, and 2007, contravene the Election Finances Act, as the

coalition's activities were not properly disclosed as part of the Ontario Liberal Party's campaign filing.

"The coalition has recently launched a further multi-media campaign"—this is prior to the 2007 election—"including televised advertising for the upcoming election. Unless immediate action is taken by you, consistent with your statutory duties, the coalition's actions may again contravene election finances law." We know for a fact that that was the case, and we see the results of that today in this massive deficit that this province is going to be incurring for many years to come. In closing—I'd like to read a couple more aspects of this.

I guess, in my time remaining, I'll close by saying I'm concerned that in order for the college of trades to be seen to be neutral, if the college is stacked with Liberal friends and appointees and sycophants, there will be a credibility gap and it will be unable to administer and do the work that's so important to this province.

I look forward to the rest of the debate.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further debate?

**Mr. Khalil Ramal:** I'm pleased and honoured to stand in my place and comment on the motion brought by the member from Sarnia-Lambton, Mr. Bailey, about the trades and apprenticeship act, 2009, if the act passes as written. I listened to him carefully. I know that the member from Sarnia-Lambton, on a personal level, is a great man, but he's bringing a very radical, very undemocratic motion. When I read the whole motion, I was surprised that a member of this House who believes in the democratic process could come up with the idea to ban people who donate to certain organizations or unions from participating on the board and the commissions.

As you know, we have almost 600-and-change agencies and commissions to oversee the conduct of trades and organizations across the province of Ontario, and the majority of those people are appointed by the tradespeople. Also, the government has some say and appoints some to represent the government and the public on those boards.

We have a committee to oversee the conduct of those appointments and to review those appointments. This committee is chaired by the Conservative caucus member from Oxford, Mr. Hardeman, and vice-chaired by Lisa MacLeod, another Conservative member, to review all the appointments and see the eligibility and qualifications of the people who are going to be appointed to those commissions, agencies and boards across Ontario.

We enjoy democracy in this province. Everyone has different directions and ideologies, different approaches and philosophies. That's why every one of us enjoys those directions with freedom, and we have the right to represent ourselves in the way we want, according to the law and the Constitution of this land.

The trade unions and the unions have, in the past, supported many different parties. They supported the Conservatives one time; they've supported the NDP and the Liberals. It depends on the policies each party comes up with. That's why I think it would be undemocratic to ban

any member from participating in and being a member of a board or trade commission.

I want to say openly to my colleague from Sarnia-Lambton that I hope he changes his mind after this debate. I think he believes in democracy and the democratic approach. We shouldn't be banning anyone from participating on the boards. Every one of us brings different views.

Our government committed to invest in skills and trades in Ontario, because we believe strongly that tradespeople and skilled people in Ontario will help us to maintain our prosperity and continue to build this beautiful province. That's why last September we decided to create that college: to give the trades and skills some kind of classification, an uplift in the eyes of people. As you know, when you have a kid who wants to go to college or be a tradesperson, the perception is not that great. People say it's better to be a doctor, engineer, professor or pharmacist because those have social status in our communities. By establishing this college, we will give the trades and skilled people across Ontario a lift. We'll give them some kind of special status in people's perceptions and create different perceptions. We need them badly in this province.

I was going to review how much we invested in the skills and trades centres in Ontario. I discovered that in the riding of the member who introduced this motion, we invested more than \$100,000 in the Sarnia training centre. In Waterloo, where the Conservative member from Kitchener-Waterloo is from, we invested \$246,000. In Burlington, with Mrs. Savoline representing the area, we invested \$627,000. And in Oshawa, same story. So we invested millions of dollars in centres that don't belong to Liberal members because we don't believe in ideology and party lines when we invest in skills and trades in the province of Ontario.

**1420**

We believe strongly in the people of this province despite their colour, despite their age, despite their party affiliation. We believe in people who can deliver the goods for us, who can work on any level, who are able to deliver their skills and utilize their efforts and intelligence to help the province. We continue to invest in this area because we believe strongly that this is an important area for all of us.

That's why I'm against the motion. I'm going to vote against it because I believe this motion is undemocratic. Every person, despite his or her ideology, should be allowed to run for office, should be allowed to be on the board, because it's important for all of us to bring all the skills together because we need them all.

Again, I hope all the members of this House will join me and vote against this motion because this motion is undemocratic.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further debate?

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** I'm going to say from the outset that I will not be supporting this motion. I understand what the member is getting at; I just find it a bit

disturbing and I have to admit that. What it says is, “No representative of corporations or trade unions that made donations to Working Families shall be appointed as members of the board of the college of trades.” It speaks to a little problem here. It says, “If they don’t support me and my party, but they supported another party, it’s wrong and they should not derive any benefit whatsoever,” which suggests that if the Tories were elected, they would only support the people who supported them and anyone who opposed them wouldn’t get any funding. It doesn’t make any sense as a motion, and it speaks badly of your party, member from Sarnia–Lambton, and it worries me; I have to tell you that.

I have to say, as far as I know, I don’t think I personally got money from the coalition.

**Mr. Tony Ruprecht:** Oh, yes, you did.

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** Tony, I don’t believe I got any money from the coalition. You were the largest recipient of that largesse, if not the only recipient. I don’t mean you alone, member from Parkdale; I mean your party.

But that’s neither here nor there. This is democracy, the way it works. People set themselves up under whatever name they want, and then they support whatever party they want. I may not be the recipient of that kindness or largesse, and God bless, you do what you can, you do your best. The Liberals benefit from that, God bless. New Democrats did not and Tories did not, but am I going to say, because they contributed to your party, the Liberal Party, that these folks should not be represented at all on that board? I’m not going to say that.

I know that the Conservative Party has a serious problem with this college of trades. I’m not going to speak too long about the college of trades or what amendments were made or what amendments I introduced that were supported or not supported, because we’re going to be able to debate the college of trades for third reading soon and that will give me an opportunity to have a whole hour to debate that more thoroughly. That’s not what is before us.

I know that the member, in committee, raised the issue of ratios. I know that he and his party want to reduce the ratios in the apprenticeship programs, which currently stand, in many apprenticeship programs, as a three-to-one ratio of journeypersons to apprentices, and it varies from trade to trade. It could be four to one, five to one or two to one, and in some cases it’s three to one. The point about ratios is that it’s mostly about safety and making sure that the training an apprentice is getting is the kind that permits him or her to do their job well and do it safely and in a safe environment. Those are the ratio issues.

I know that Tories are opposed to it, and this motion gives them a reason to talk about that. That’s fine; they will have an opportunity to say those things in third reading debate. But that’s not really what the motion is about. It’s about attacking Working Families in general and in specifics. While I understand that they have opinions about that and they’re unhappy about the fact

that this coalition didn’t support them, I’m not quite sure how that relates at all to this college of trades.

The college of trades was set up on the recommendation of Mr. Armstrong, who recommended that the ministry “consult with stakeholders with the objective of establishing a new, all-trades governing institution—the college of trades—whose functions would include the establishment of expert panels to consider applications for compulsory certification and provide advice to the minister; to engage in certification enforcement; to raise the profile and status of the trades; and provide for periodic review(s) of ratio provisions.” Ratio provisions are part of this bill. An impartial board made up of experts will deal with it and comment on what those ratios are. I think that is a reasonable thing to do.

This college is going to have the responsibility of promoting the trades. I hope it does that, and I hope it does that well. I’m not sure whether it will have the money to promote itself, but we hope it will. In my view, this Liberal government has not promoted the trades very well. In fact, when we talk about Second Career, a program that was established a year and a half ago by this government—they talked about a second career program to give an opportunity to those who were unemployed to get into another trade. We attacked the government and the minister because in the early months of that program—within six months—they had only gotten about 11,100 registrants into the program.

We attacked it because the program was structured in such a way as to limit the number of applications. We did not attack the program on the basis that it was a bad idea, because in a climate of high unemployment when so many are looking for opportunities, particularly when they’re laid off, we need to be able to provide every possible way to re-establish those workers in a different field, to reconnect them to a different field so that they can find gainful employment that would allow them, as men and women, to be able to earn a decent living. You cannot do it while you’re unemployed, and you cannot do it in a climate where so many manufacturing jobs are disappearing. So why would we not support a program such as Second Career?

Our attack on the government was that the conditions were so restrictive that it only allowed 11,000 or so—11,100—to apply to get into such a program. When we criticized the government consistently about that particular issue, the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities finally relented, perhaps nudged by the Premier, to expand the criteria to allow more and more to opt in to such a program. Once the criteria were relaxed, we now learn that 20,000 or so have applied for such a program and that it has been so successful that the government has decided that it is going to streamline and restructure it.

**1430**

What that means is that in order to make it sustainable, the government is going to have to cut back and make it restrictive once again, as it did in the previous year. That’s what they’re doing. At a time when we need to enhance that program, expand it, allow more and more un-

employed to take advantage of a second career opportunity, this government is going to make it, so-called, sustainable by making sure fewer people are able to apply, and while some government members are saying they're providing more money, whatever money they're providing will only support those applicants who made an application in June, and possibly July. But those who applied to get into that program in September and October cannot get in, and new applicants will have to wait until January.

This government doesn't have a great record on this—it doesn't. In all the training programs this government has had, they were obsessed with the idea of registrants rather than how many people are able to complete the program. We know that the majority of people who went into those apprenticeship programs did not complete the program, which is what it should be about. It shouldn't be about obsession with registration; it should be about an obsession that those who joined the program were able to complete it. There's no great record here; there's none to talk about. That's the story we should be talking about. So, when we talk about the college of trades—it does have some deficiencies you can talk about—talk about those. That's what we should be talking about.

If you feel strongly about the ratios, make your motion about ratios and why you somehow feel this new board is not going to deal with it. But it will deal with it. You may not agree—I might not even agree—with a conclusion this review panel will make, but I'm going to have to trust the fact that it's going to have experts in the trades with others on that review panel who are going to make wise judgements about what that ratio should be. We're going to have to rely on that—we have to.

There are trade boards that are being established by this college of trades, and many tradesmen and tradeswomen will be represented. We hope they will be represented adequately and well, including other divisional boards. Yes, we know that the board is going to be appointed by an appointments council, and who knows who these folks are going to be? This is true. There are legitimate concerns, both from a New Democratic perspective and a Conservative perspective, in terms of who is likely going to be on that board. We might disagree, but we're going to have to wait and see, and deal with it as it comes. We, as critics, are going to have an opportunity to say, "Yeah, it worked okay," or, "It didn't work so well," and we'll have the opportunity to attack the government on a regular basis, as we always do in opposition.

I can't support this motion the way it's written. It is a bit risky, and the language is a bit dangerous in terms of what it says. I do not agree with the direction this is going, so I will be opposing it from a personal point of view.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further debate?

**Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn:** It's a pleasure to join the debate today. We're debating a private member's motion brought forward by the member from Sarnia-Lambton. I,

frankly, was quite surprised to see this when it came forward, because I thought the days were long, long behind us when we tried to ban certain members of our society from fully participating in the level of government they choose and for lending their expertise to areas where they may have that expertise.

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** It's anti-democratic.

**Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn:** It's very anti-democratic, and I'm really shocked to see it here, to be honest with you. I can't imagine that it's even constitutional. I'm not a lawyer, but it seems to me that all members of our society should be able to participate fully, especially working families. Working families are the backbone of our society. They should be allowed to participate fully in decisions that are being made by this government.

It's a pleasure, though. It gives us an opportunity to comment further on Bill 183, the Ontario College of Trades and Apprenticeship Act. I've said before, and I've heard it in my own communities and in other communities around Ontario, that there's an appetite for change today in the world of work. There's an appetite for change among the apprentices who are learning new skills in our society, among the tradespeople and journey-persons who are participating in the workforce today and among the trade unions themselves, and certainly the employers in this province are saying, "We need skilled workers. We need to keep up with the economy of the future."

So it's clear that we've got a need to address the shortage of workers in the skilled trades right here in Ontario, and if we're able to do that, that's very good for business. Previous governments have tried to do this. They've met with some success, and they've met with some failure. I think this is a progressive step that's going to allow us to move forward. We're taking, I think, a number of progressive steps in order to do this. One of those initiatives is what we have before us today in one form, and that is the decision to create a college of trades. What that does is give some recognition to the trades that is long overdue, and it's a subject actually of the member from Sarnia-Lambton's motion today. I think what he's doing is taking an initiative that I think has met with a lot of success in the community. We've had amendments come forward certainly from our side of the House and amendments come forward from the member from Trinity-Spadina that were supported at the committee level. What we tried to do was take the input we received from stakeholders and craft an even better bill, and I think we've done this.

What the college is going to do is promote involvement in the trades amongst young people, promote the concept of a career in the skilled trades, and it's going to modernize the apprenticeship system that we have here in the province. But it's also going to ensure that Ontario skilled trades continue to serve and protect the public interest and meet the growing needs of the economy.

There's no reason to believe that the college of trades, the trade unions themselves, or the trades themselves, don't deserve the same consideration that we currently

extend to teachers, doctors and nurses. If you're going to encourage young people to enter the trades, certainly you have to give the trades the recognition that they deserve—and that's exactly what this does. It's going to help promote the skilled trades as careers and make sure that the proper training is applied and is made available to those young people to decide the trades are actually careers for them.

Our government has made investing in its apprenticeship program in skilled trades a priority—simply because it is a financial imperative; we need to do it. We've almost doubled the number of apprentices currently being trained. Right now, in the province of Ontario, there are 120,000 apprentices being trained for work in the skilled trades. It has almost doubled since 2002; in seven or eight short years, it has almost doubled.

New apprenticeship registrations are growing. We had more than 28,000 in 2008-09. We've extended tax credits to 2012. Seventy-one of our district school boards around the province are participating in the Ontario youth apprenticeship program. That's over 25,000 students expected to participate this year in Ontario youth apprenticeship programs.

It's a clear sign that we're starting to make inroads. Young people are starting to realize that trades are perhaps the route for them in a career and that they can have a good lifestyle, they can afford the things they want in our society, they can earn a decent wage, and they can put the skills they have to use in our society to help build a much stronger Ontario, and that helps address the shortage we have of skilled workers.

It's a shame that the official opposition doesn't share that. It is a shame, because I think if we sat down, we'd realize that it is a part of our economy that we need to address. Instead, we get a motion put before us like this, that says if you are part of a working family, if you are part of an organization called Working Families, you're not allowed to participate in the same way that any other member of our society would be allowed to participate in this college. That is simply wrong.

Whatever your ideological point of view is towards trade unions, towards management and employer relations, trying to ban a number of people in our society from participating in what is a new and exciting initiative like the college of trades is simply not the Canadian way of doing things.

I was very shocked to see this come forward. I'm not sure if the member was put up to it or if this was his own idea, but those weren't the sort of comments we were getting at the committee from this member. There was an opportunity to bring the idea forward then. Instead, the member, I think, was trying to be as progressive as he could in his comments towards the college of trades. This comes as a little bit of a shock, and I would ask the member to reconsider its presence on the floor here today.

Ontario supports its working families. It always has. Ontario's working families expect support from their levels of government, and this certainly runs contrary to

that. I would ask all members of the House to oppose this motion.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Further debate?

**Mr. Frank Klees:** At the outset, I want to make it very clear that I will not be supporting this motion by my colleague from Sarnia-Lambton. I also want to make it very clear that we are gathered here today, this afternoon, in private members' business, which allows for individual members of this House to bring forward matters of business that they feel strongly about, that they feel should be debated. This is not—certainly on the part of our caucus—an official opposition position, as the former speaker referred to it.

**1440**

I know that my colleague from Trinity-Spadina, in his comments as well, made reference to the PC caucus position on this. I want to make it very clear that this is not a PC caucus position either. It is the right of the member from Sarnia-Lambton to bring it forward. We are debating it. I am debating it. I'm debating it because I want to make it very clear that I do not support it.

I do want to recognize the member's intention, however. I believe that the member, knowing him as I do, is wanting to, perhaps in his own way, warn the government and essentially give caution to the government as well as the college that its very effectiveness is going to be dependent on the integrity of the people who sit on that board and who will be making very important decisions about a very important sector of our economy, namely the trades. The last thing that we want is for this college to, in any way, have its integrity undermined or the decisions that it makes questioned because of a perception that perhaps the decisions are unduly influenced, perhaps by a particular segment, by a particular group of people.

In this particular case, the resolution makes reference—and I'll read it from the motion—to an organization called Working Families. The member opposite—I'm trying to find his riding—Oakville. Yes, Mr. Flynn, the member from Oakville—sorry—referred to “working families” in the generic sense. That is not what this resolution refers to. It does refer to a very specific organization that is well organized, that was highly funded in previous elections, that, according to their own claims, had a significant impact on the outcome of the last couple of elections.

I believe that any organization has the right to be engaged and should be engaged in the political process. So one of the reasons that I'm not supporting this motion is because I don't want in any way to send a signal to say that anyone in this province should somehow be excluded from expressing their opinions, from being engaged in the political process. In fact, I have spent my political career for the last 35 years encouraging people to become engaged in the political process. In fact, on the back of my business card I have the words inscribed, “If you don't become involved in the political process, you are destined to be governed by those who do.” It's on the

back of every one of my cards. When I hand my card out, I hand it out with that phrase pointing out so that people would actually look at it.

So, whether people are involved in unions or other organizations, I think, without question, they have the right to be involved. However, there is, I believe, a side to this that deserves our attention and that we should be cautious about, and that is, if a particular organization makes significant financial contributions to any political party, there is always the caution that must be raised, and that is that there is not undue influence in terms of the policy decisions that that government then makes or a political party takes in terms of a policy position, if it isn't in the public interest. So I believe that what the member is saying is, given the track record of the organization called Working Families, we need to be concerned.

I'm going to just make very quick reference, for example, to an article that was written by Ian Urquhart. In his article at the time, and I quote for the benefit of people who are watching this debate so that it may help them understand my colleague's position on this a little better: "The ads"—these are the ads he's referring to now placed by this organization called Working Families—"not only tore a strip off Eves; they also allowed Dalton McGuinty and the Liberals to take the high road with a positive campaign, in the knowledge that the dirty work was being done for them by the coalition."

When you look at the coalition and you look at the members of the coalition, without question the vast majority of that membership are, in fact, unions, right across the board, and they're very broadly represented there. So I think, to the point of my colleague, there is a caution that's being put forward to say, "Look, let's ensure that this college, the Ontario college of trades and apprenticeship, can, in fact, do its job without any implication of a lack of integrity." I have confidence that it will.

Whether someone is a member of a union or any organization, first of all, doesn't mean that they necessarily share all of the tenets of the leadership of that organization, it doesn't mean that they will not make independent decisions as members of another organization, it doesn't mean that they won't put their profession first and foremost in terms of what is the right thing to do, and there is a process that is going to be followed in terms of appointing the various members of the board.

I think the very fact that this debate has taken place is also sending a signal to those who will have the responsibility to make these decisions, and in the end I'm hopeful and I believe that it will have a positive effect.

I'll conclude my remarks by simply saying that—and I want to underscore it again—I understand the intent, but I disagree with the way that this resolution has been brought forward, which is why I won't be supporting it. I know that members here also will understand that this is not a caucus position, it is not a party position; it is the initiative of one individual, one member of this House,

who has the right to have his say, and he has done that today.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further debate?

**Mr. Robert Bailey:** I'd like to thank all of the speakers who commented today: the members from London–Fanshawe, Trinity–Spadina, Oakville and Newmarket–Aurora. Yes, the one thing today that was the main goal was to get the intent of my concern about the inference—I would like to just make sure that I correct the record as well. I did speak in committee in favour of the Ontario College of Trades. I, over the years, have belonged to two trade unions myself: one, a construction union in the past and, more recently, the Communications, Energy and Paperworkers Union. I helped—was an organizer as well.

My intent was to draw the connection that somewhere down the road, this college of trades wouldn't be called into question—any decisions that they make, any rulings that they make—because of this undue influence that money perhaps could have had or has had in elections. It's on the record. They themselves, the people who were principals in this coalition, have said—and bragged, in fact—that they had great impact, that they've bought influence, in their words, in future decisions.

**1450**

My concern is that this be put on the record so that it would be a cautionary note, both for the organizations as they go forward and this college—which I believe in very much, because we are going to need those kinds of skills as we go forward—so that when any decisions are made they think about that, and that the government, in any appointments they make, also take these into account so that nobody can misrepresent and misunderstand any decisions that are made.

So, if anything, today it has got on the record. It was a position of my own, nothing to do with my caucus or party. It was a decision that I made. I was quite concerned, during the last couple of elections. I watched the way the advertising and things were going on from the Working Families Coalition. I had some concerns about that, so I thought this was an opportunity to bring this forward as a private member's resolution.

I'd like to thank all of the members for their kindness and understanding and also for their comments to me at this time.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** If the honourable member would like, you do have two further minutes for your response. That's fine?

We'll vote on this item in about 100 minutes.

#### ONTARIO POET LAUREATE

**Mr. Monte Kwinter:** I move that, in the opinion of this House, the Legislative Assembly of Ontario should establish the position of Ontario Poet Laureate to promote art and literacy in Ontario.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Mr. Kwinter moves private member's notice of motion number 114.

Pursuant to standing order 98, the honourable member has up to 12 minutes for his presentation.

**Mr. Monte Kwinter:** Since I gave notice that I was going to be introducing this bill, I've had several people come up to me and say, "Why are you involved in this particular aspect of our society?" They obviously didn't know my background, because when you take a look at the motion, it talks about the fact that it promotes art and literacy in Ontario, and I happen to have a very strong background in both. Plus, I'm going to tie it in to the fact that it's of economic benefit to the province.

Again, some may not know, but I'm a graduate of the Ontario College of Art. I have been the vice-president of the Ontario College of Art. I got a bachelor of fine arts degree from Syracuse University. I attended the Institute of Contemporary Art in Boston. I have been on the board of governors of the Ontario College of Art and Design, and I have an honorary doctorate from the Ontario College of Art and Design.

All of that gives me a background in the arts and one that, just by coincidence, also ties in to that of literacy, in that some 50-odd years ago I was the editorial director of a publishing company in Montreal that published 13 magazines, including one called the *Montrealer*. I had the opportunity of having a freelance writer come to see me monthly to try to sell me an article for \$25, which I gladly paid at the time, and that happened to be Mordecai Richler. So that was an opportunity for me to see the literary side and the artistic side.

On a personal note, my wife and I, literally from the day we were married, have been devotees of the cryptic crossword puzzle. If you know anything about cryptic puzzles, they're not regular puzzles; they're ones where you have to really determine the meaning of the word they're looking for. It's a challenge. We do them every single day. So I'm just trying to establish my bona fides.

To get to the connection between art and literacy and the Poet Laureate, I want to give you an overview of what the cultural community means to Ontario.

Ontario's highest priority is to build a stronger, more competitive economy. The province's cultural sector plays a key role in helping us to meet this goal. Ontario's cultural sector accounts for nearly \$20 billion of our provincial GDP. It's also one of the fastest-growing sectors of the economy. Between 1999 and 2007, it created over 80,000 net new jobs in Ontario. This is an increase of almost 40%, compared with 17% in the overall Ontario economy. Strategic investments in our cultural industries can generate significant revenues and help drive innovations.

The Ontario Arts Council, an agency of the Ministry of Culture, has developed literature programs to encourage the development, publication and presentation of new works of literary significance in the province. The OAC's literature office funds writers, storytellers and spoken word artists in all forms. Some of these literacy programs include reading clubs, literacy camps, book drives, reading and writing workshops, literacy tutoring, outreach programs, resource centres, book fairs and festivals,

storytelling, coaching programs, culturally sensitive literacy for francophone, aboriginal and ethno-cultural communities.

The government of Ontario, through the Ontario Media Development Corp. supports the Trillium Book Award/Prix Trillium. The Trillium Book Award/Prix Trillium encourages excellence in literature through its significant investment in Ontario-based writers. Each year, three titles are short-listed for the Trillium Book Award for poetry in English language, which recognizes literary achievement for first, second or third published work of poetry. Three titles are also short-listed for the Trillium Book Award for children's literature and French language, which is awarded in alternating years with the Trillium Book Award for poetry in the French language. The winner for each of these awards receives \$10,000 and their publisher \$2,000 for a promotion of the titles, and finalists for these awards also receive a \$500 honorarium.

Now we get to the gist of this motion, which is to establish a Poet Laureate for Ontario. Poet Laureate is the title conferred in Britain by the monarch on a poet whose duty it is to write commemorative odes and verse. It's an outgrowth of the medieval English custom of having versifiers and minstrels in the King's retinue and of the later royal patronage of poets such as Chaucer and Spenser.

On December 18, 2001, the office of the Parliamentary Poet Laureate was given royal assent in the federal Parliament. Just by coincidence, this particular bill, Bill S-10, was sponsored by Senator Jerry Grafstein. Jerry and I have been friends for over 50 years; he's a neighbour of mine. Until I got involved in this resolution, I had no idea that he was behind this particular bill.

The Canadian Parliamentary Poet Laureate is appointed as an officer of the Library of Parliament. The position alternates between an English- and French-speaking laureate each term and candidates must be able to write in both English and French, must have a substantial publication history displaying literary excellence, including poetry, and must have work written reflecting Canada, among other criteria.

The first-ever Canadian Parliamentary Poet Laureate was awarded to George Bowering in 2002; in 2004, the title was transferred to Pauline Michel; and in 2006 to John Steffler. His term ended on December 3, 2008, and nominations for the position were opened to residents of Canada up to September 2008. Pierre DesRuisseaux was named the new laureate on April 28.

In his speech, when the bill was tabled in the Senate, Senator Grafstein wrote—and I want to quote him because I think he says it a lot better than I could. It says, "The great English poet, William Blake, was often quoted ... in the British House of Commons.... The power of poetry is potent. Everything we do here is based on words. Words are the only business of parliamentarians. Some argue Parliament ... works in a cocoon, immune to the realities of life since Parliament can deal mostly in laws that please the largest numbers. The Poet Laureate

can place a mirror before Canadians that refracts different images of life. He can parse our common lexicon in different ways. We need diversity of thought to create a unity of dreams and a unity of visions. Poetry might even add some greater sense and sensibility to the word factory of Canada—to our Parliament. Poetry might bring fresh realities, new light, to the very heart of the Canadian soul, wherever it may reside.”

1500

What is the mandate of the federal Poet Laureate? I should tell you that there are various jurisdictions around the world that have appointed Poet Laureates. It is to write poetry for use in Parliament on important occasions, to sponsor poetry readings, to advise the parliamentary librarian regarding the library's collection and acquisition to enrich its cultural materials, perform other related duties at the request of the Speaker or the parliamentary librarian, and give an annual lecture and reading of his or her poetry. Often a Poet Laureate will create a legacy project during that term.

When we talk about words, the interesting thing—and there's an old saying that, “The pen is mightier than the sword.” I want to quote a very famous speech. As a matter of fact, it's rated as one of the most famous speeches ever made, and it was made by Abraham Lincoln in his Gettysburg address. He followed Edward Everett, who was the main speaker at this event. The speaker, Mr. Everett, delivered a two-hour, 13,607-word oration. Lincoln spoke for under three minutes and summarized the war in 10 sentences. It began:

“Fourscore and seven years ago, our fathers brought forward on this continent a new nation conceived in liberty and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal.”

Later on in his speech, he went on to say, “The world will little note nor long remember what we say here, but it can never forget what they did here.” The irony of that situation is that it was just the opposite: that nobody knew exactly, unless you're a historian, what was going on at Gettysburg. But those particular words still ring out.

A very famous story that I want to relate also gives you the impact of what literacy and poetry can bring to the human experience, and this is a story of perhaps the most famous war poem of all time. In the second week of fighting during the second battle of Ypres, a Canadian artillery officer, Lieutenant Alexis Helmer, was killed on May 2, 1915, by a German artillery shell. He was a friend of the great Canadian military doctor Major John McCrae. John was asked to conduct a burial service owing to the chaplain being called away on duty elsewhere. It is believed that, later that evening, John began the draft for his famous poem “In Flanders Fields.”

We are coming up to November 11 shortly, on Remembrance Day, and ceremonies across Canada undoubtedly will be, in fact, reciting “In Flanders Fields.” That poem was also reputedly the genesis for having the poppy as the symbol of the Remembrance Day service.

That is just an overview of why I think it's important that we bring forward and give credence to a Poet

Laureate who can, in fact, reflect on what is happening in the country, can get into the schools, can relate the power of the written word, to do the things that will enhance our quality of life and, as an added benefit, get us to the point where we can become creative and we can benefit through the economic stimulus that the cultural centre and the cultural industries are providing.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further debate.

**Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer:** I'm certainly very pleased to speak in favour of the motion that has been put forward by my colleague Mr. Kwinter today, October 22, “That, in the opinion of this House, the Legislative Assembly of Ontario should establish the position of Ontario Poet Laureate to promote art and literacy in Ontario.”

As a former English teacher, I obviously wholeheartedly support this motion. I would also say to you, as someone who enjoyed studying literature and learning poetry when I was at school, I'm really quite pleased to see the establishment of this position.

I think we've heard a little bit of what happens elsewhere. We know that in the federal House, they did create the position of Poet Laureate in 2001. It was intended to bring Canadians' attention to poetry, both the spoken and the written word, and also to be able to demonstrate the role it has had in our lives. Of course, today we do have a national, two provincial and many municipal Poet Laureates across the country; however, no other province as large as ours has created the role of Poet Laureate to this date.

So this person would have a significant role. They would serve as literary ambassador. They would be an advocate for poetry, for language and for the arts, which certainly is important, and they would be in a position where they could promote art and culture within their community. I know that, on occasion, some of these individuals are encouraged, or they are required, to write poems for special occasions, and I'm going to refer to that a little bit later when I talk about the inaugural of President Kennedy.

The Poet Laureate obviously concentrates on their own body of work, and of course they share that with the community, so it is a significant role. If I take a look at my own community and I take a look at the support that my community provides for art and for literacy, certainly this is exactly what my community would be supportive of. In fact, last night I had the pleasure to attend the opening of a new museum in the city of Waterloo. It is the very first museum, and it's obviously going to have the opportunity to record the rich heritage and the legacy of our community. We're going to be in a position where we can share that with future generations in order that our children and our grandchildren can take a look at where the city has been and also, based upon the past, perhaps get some indication of where the community is going.

Last night, some members of the Seagram family were present. The Seagrams have had a very important role in the history of our community, and certainly life there has been influenced.

Our community has also been influenced by the many immigrants who have come to Kitchener–Waterloo. We have the Germans. We recently celebrated Oktoberfest. The culture and the heritage of our community has been very much influenced by the German community. Of course, we currently have a very multicultural community, and our community is enriched by the past and also by those who are coming in the present.

But let's take a look at the position and let's take a look at who else has Poet Laureates.

We've got Prince Edward Island. We've got Saskatchewan. We've got the Yukon. We've got municipalities throughout Canada that have these individuals. The term seems to vary. The Canadian Poet Laureate is a two-year term, Toronto's is a three-year term, and the term of the American Poet Laureate is one year with the possibility of a reappointment.

What about the role of this individual in different jurisdictions? Well, in Canada, the individual is required to encourage and promote the importance of literature, culture and language in Canadian society. The one in Toronto serves as the city's literary ambassador, and the mandate also includes the creation of a legacy project that will be unique to the individual. In the city of Edmonton, Alberta, the Poet Laureate is to reflect the life of Edmonton through readings of poetry. And the objectives of the Prince Edward Island Poet Laureate program include the opportunity to celebrate Prince Edward Island and its people, to raise the profile of poets and poetry in general, to promote a higher standard of literacy, and to provide for the expression of culture and heritage through the literary arts.

In the United States, the Poet Laureate, again, seeks to raise the national consciousness to a greater appreciation of the reading and the writing of poetry.

#### 1510

Now, what I found quite intriguing was to take a look at some of the famous Poets Laureate from the past. If you take a look at the United Kingdom, you would see that in 1843, William Wordsworth was the Poet Laureate; in 1850, Alfred Tennyson. Of course, we all remember the lines from one of his poems:

Tis better to have loved and lost  
Than never to have loved at all.

In the United States, we had Robert Frost in 1958. He was one of the most famous American poets, a four-time Pulitzer Prize winner for poetry. I can remember, when I was chair of the Waterloo school board, that we actually took a few lines from one of his poems and used those as our vision for taking a look at where we were going to take the children and students within our board. We used as our theme:

Two roads diverged in a wood, and I,  
I took the one less traveled by,  
And that has made all the difference.

So I think people today still like to take a look at poetry. People use poetry, oftentimes, when they're delivering addresses. That's where I want to go now, to Robert Frost, because Robert Frost became the very first

poet to read in the program of a presidential inauguration in 1961.

The decision was made at that time to include Frost in the inauguration, because they wanted to focus attention on Kennedy as a man of culture as well as a man interested in culture. Kennedy's decision to include Frost was, I think, to a large measure as well, a personal gesture to the poet who was responsible for much of the momentum early in the President's campaign.

What Frost had done, which I don't think people remember, is that on March 26, 1959, prior to a gala to celebrate his 85th birthday, he gave a press conference at the Waldorf Astoria in New York City. Among the questions asked was one where he responded, "The next President of the United States will be from Boston." Pressed to name the individual, he replied, "He's a puritan named Kennedy." The national press picked up his prediction that the junior senator from Massachusetts, who had not even formally declared his candidacy, would be elected the next President. Frost repeated this prediction in many, if not most, of the lectures and public appearances he gave over the subsequent months, and continued to endorse candidate Kennedy whenever he could. Kennedy, in turn, quoted from the final stanza of Frost's poem "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening" at the close of many of his campaign speeches when he said,

But I have promises to keep,  
And miles to go before I sleep.

Obviously, Frost was elated at the outcome, when he learned that Kennedy had indeed won the election.

Anyway, he was invited to the inauguration ceremonies. He responded that he would accept the honour to participate, and Kennedy said, "Would you recite a new poem?" As inauguration day approached, Frost did have a new poem, entitled "Dedication"—he later re-titled it "For John F. Kennedy His Inauguration"—and his plan was to read that as the preface to the poem Kennedy had requested. But on the drive to the Capitol on January 20, 1961, Frost—you have to remember he was now an older man—worry that the piece, which had been typed on one of the hotel typewriters the night before, was difficult to read, even in good light. And when he stood to read the poem, he was afraid that the wind and the bright reflection of sunlight off new-fallen snow would make the poem impossible to read—and that happened. Instead, he was able to recite *The Gift Outright* from memory.

Here is an example of a poet who obviously had a huge impact on the President of the United States, played a very significant role in his victory. And so today we are here, and if this is passed obviously we'll be in a position where we can be appointing Poets Laureate. No doubt they will be able to influence this province, the arts and literature, and certainly they are going to be in a position as well where they can promote the literature and the culture of Ontario. So I support this.

**The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier):** Further debate?

**Mr. Peter Tabuns:** It's a pleasure to stand today and speak in support of this resolution that's before the House. It's a good motion, and it's one that all members of the New Democratic Party in this House will be supporting.

I'll just touch briefly on the history of Poets Laureate. The role was created to encourage and promote the importance of literature, culture and language within Canadian society by drawing the public's attention to poetry—both spoken and written—and to the nature of the need for poetry.

Many countries around the world, including the United Kingdom and the United States, have appointed official Poets Laureate. It's an honourable tradition and one that we in Ontario would benefit from following.

Canada's federal Poet Laureate position was established in 2001. Across Canada, there are now 19 Poets Laureate, including the federal parliamentary Poet Laureate, provincial Poets Laureate, and municipal Poets Laureate. Three provinces have Poets Laureate—PEI, Saskatchewan and the Yukon Territory. Numerous municipalities also have Poets Laureate, and that includes four in Ontario. Toronto, Brantford, Owen Sound and Cobalt all have Poets Laureate. Dionne Brand, an internationally renowned poet, essayist and novelist, was just appointed the Poet Laureate of Toronto.

Given the examples that exist across this country, indeed exist at the federal level, it makes complete sense that we here at the provincial level in Ontario should also appoint our own Poet Laureate. There is no question that the need to bring awareness of the rich world of poetry and literary pursuits in general to the populace as a whole is important. There are far too many children who grow up without this kind of exposure. Even more so, there are far too many artists who spend their entire lives perfecting their craft but who never receive recognition for their accomplishments. In Ontario, were we to have a Poet Laureate, we might well address some of these issues.

But I have to say to you, notwithstanding my support for the resolution, I think there are broader questions about support for the arts that remain to be answered, and as much as this is a worthy resolution, one that I intend to vote for, I think we have to consider the larger question of support for the arts and the role of the arts in this society, in this province. We in the NDP have long called for a number of steps forward for arts and artists in Ontario. We need to ensure that Ontarians who make their living in the arts and culture sector are entitled to the same basic employment protections as workers in every other sector across this province.

Currently, artists are excluded from the protection offered by the Employment Standards Act when the act could be amended very simply to ensure that artists are given the same protection as employees working in a variety of fields. I don't think anyone can argue that artists should not be entitled to the same protections—a minimum rate of pay, vacation with pay and overtime—that other Ontario workers enjoy.

**1520**

As you may well be aware and certainly as Mr. Kwinter is aware, we have an extraordinarily rich arts sector here in Ontario. I had the opportunity last week to attend the play *The Turn of the Screw* at Campbell House, down at University and Queen, staged by theatre company DVxT. An extraordinary production: two people carrying the whole story, playing all the characters, set in an 18th-century home. I have to say that that play, done in large chunks by candlelight in these rooms that reflected the era of the time, was very powerful, very moving, and spoke to and speaks to the ability of artists in this province to actually deliver an extraordinary product, an extraordinary piece of work to enrich our lives.

When you look at arts and culture as a whole in Ontario, the arts sector is worth about \$16 billion to our economy. It's a very big piece. Across Canada there are about 140,000 people who list art as their major occupation. About 40% of these people are Ontarians. Ontario has double the number of artists living in our province compared to any other province across the country: a very significant group of people who have a very rich contribution that they make to the lives of everyone in Ontario.

This is a big sector. It has a significant impact. It is of consequence. But in spite of this hefty contribution that is made—those statistics, the reality of their contribution—there's another story when it comes to the livelihood of those making up this industry, and that is of tremendous concern.

When we look at the statistics of whether this huge economic contribution actually benefits the very people making up the industry, we see a very disturbing answer. Artists in Ontario earn, on average, 38% less than other workers. It was acknowledged by the Minister of Culture's own advisory council in its 2006 report that the average annual earnings of Ontario artists is \$26,800, almost one quarter less than that of the overall labour force in Ontario. Artists in many Ontario cities earn less than \$20,000 per annum, despite the fact that the percentage of artists with post-secondary qualifications is nearly double that of the overall labour force.

I say to Mr. Kwinter: His resolution to provide for a provincial Poet Laureate may well further raise the profile of the arts and raise the profile of what I see as a very pressing issue: making sure that artists have enough income that in fact they can continue to carry on their craft and the work they do to enrich this province. In his resolution, not only do I see an advantage to the province in terms of having someone who thinks poetically about our direction and our everyday lives, but I also think it may be helpful in raising the profile of artists and their contribution.

The nature of work in the arts and culture sector means that 44% of Ontario artists are self-employed, compared to 7% of the overall labour force. This is a group—how can I best say it?—that is subject to a large volume of instability and insecurity.

I had the opportunity recently to go door to door in my riding and talk to my constituents, many of whom are artists who have found in the last few months that life has been far more difficult. I've talked to actors who have worked in film and television and found that they've once again become caterers. I'm sure they are very good caterers, but when you have a talent for projecting emotion, for representing a reality on film, to not be able to use that talent is just a simple waste, a tragic waste.

What we need in this province for the arts to thrive is a substantial investment in the arts and an understanding of the arts as a strategic part of our economy in the long term. We have a situation in Ontario where we can speak to a wide variety of audiences around the world in a wide variety of languages: French, English, Cantonese, Mandarin, Urdu, Hindi. We can speak to mass audiences over the Internet, electronically, with the base of talent that we have in this province in a way that, I think, few other countries can.

We have people in the arts with Asian backgrounds who run very successful theatrical programs; fu-GEN theatre company is holding a fundraising banquet this coming Monday. In the past, they successfully developed a variety of productions, including *Banana Boys*. This kind of artistic endeavour, backed by the provincial government, given the sort of support that we would see for other research and development, would do very well for us. It would give us yet another avenue for developing the economy of this province to go far beyond that \$16 billion that's already currently generated in the arts, culture and entertainment sector. It will give us outlets for our talents, for our carpenters, our electricians, our programmers, our Internet operators. We should not shy away from taking advantage of those opportunities.

In 2006, there was debate about status-of-the-artist legislation. There was a call on the part of artists for status-of-the-artist legislation in Ontario to mirror what was done at the federal level. What came forward in 2007, I believe, was an arts weekend. The recognition of an arts weekend was not adequate to the size of the sector, its importance to our economy, or its importance to our everyday life. What we do need in this province is status-of-the-artist legislation that actually gives artists greater security and the ability to negotiate collectively with arts engagers so they can improve their lives and, in fact, enrich the arts in this province.

Motions like the one before us are definitely good motions. They advance the arts. They advance recognition of the arts. But we need to go beyond that simple recognition. What we need is greater investment in and greater understanding of the strategic value of the arts. We need a very different approach in this province.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further debate?

**Mrs. Liz Sandals:** I'm very pleased to rise in the House to support the motion by my friend Mr. Kwinter, that, in the opinion of this House, the Legislative Assembly of Ontario should establish the position of Ontario Poet Laureate to promote art and literacy in Ontario.

I must say, whenever I hear Mr. Kwinter speak, I'm always surprised to learn one more thing about his career. I never knew until today that, in a long list of accomplishments, he has acted as a magazine publisher. He's deep in conversation right now. But that's one more thing on the long list of achievements by Mr. Kwinter.

Today we're looking at this whole notion of a Poet Laureate for Ontario. The primary role of a Poet Laureate would be to serve as a literary ambassador and as an advocate for poetry, language and the arts. Poets Laureate around the world are used to promote art and culture within their communities. Some are encouraged, or required in some cases, to write poems for specific special occasions.

This is not a new notion. In Canada, we have a federal Poet Laureate. Several provinces and territories—Prince Edward Island, Saskatchewan, the Yukon—have Poets Laureate already. A number of municipalities across Canada have Poets Laureate—in Ontario, places as large as Toronto and as small as Cobalt in northern Ontario; in BC, Victoria, Vancouver and New Westminster; in Alberta, Edmonton; in Saskatchewan, Moose Jaw. So a whole host of communities across Canada have looked into the notion.

**1530**

I think the first question, then, is what is it that a Poet Laureate actually is required to do? In fact, as you go from jurisdiction to jurisdiction, there's actually quite a variation in what Poets Laureate may do. The primary role for the Canadian Poet Laureate is to encourage and promote the importance of literature, culture and language in Canadian society, but then there's a whole host of other duties about writing poetry and sponsoring poetry readings.

Toronto's Poet Laureate serves as the city's literary ambassador, as an advocate for poetry, language and the arts, and then has a number of other duties around attending events and creating a legacy project.

Edmonton—again, readings of poetry and an ambassador for the literary arts.

The PEI Poet Laureate, amongst other duties, is specifically required to promote a higher standard of literacy and to provide for the expression of culture and heritage through the literary arts.

So we see that there is a whole host of things that Poets Laureate may be required to do.

Personally, I like the notion of the Canadian rules that talk about promoting literature and culture and language through Canadian society, but I particularly like the PEI requirement for the Poet Laureate to have a role in promoting a higher standard of literacy. A whole host of people have been appointed Poets Laureate in various countries over many centuries.

I'm particularly impressed with the fact that, as one of its Poets Laureate, Toronto appointed Dennis Lee. Dennis Lee is a very illustrious person. He won the Governor General's Award for Poetry in 1972, was appointed an Officer of the Order of Canada in 1993, and an honorary doctorate from Trent University in 1995.

But, from my point of view, the most important thing he does or maybe the most well-known thing he does is as an author of children's poetry. Any of you who have ever read Alligator Pie to your children or your grandchildren: "Alligator pie, alligator pie, / If I don't get some I think I'm gonna die"—there's a bunch of moms and grandmas around here who are reciting with me. That was Toronto's Poet Laureate.

I think that's a great idea because that recognizes that, for small children, the richness of oral language, the rhythm in poetry, the exploration of words and the richness of words and their meaning and the fun of using them in a poetic or literary way is a really important thing that we can do in encouraging literacy.

One of the things that the Ontario Trillium Foundation does on behalf of the government of Ontario is actually support literacy programs around the province. Over 90 grants, for a total of \$6.7 million, have been awarded in support of projects all across the province that support literacy. In addition to that, the Ontario Trillium Foundation has awarded over 80 grants, for a total close to almost \$2.7 million for libraries in small rural communities.

I was in North Wellington at a little, teeny town called Clifford that most people only drive through on the way to somewhere else, but it had a wonderful new library. I've never seen a group of people who were so ecstatic to be able to have a local collection for their children and their youth to access books.

So I'm very enthusiastic about this motion and bringing attention to literacy and to literature.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further debate.

**Mrs. Laura Albanese:** I rise in support of this motion. Ontario could really benefit from having a Poet Laureate as a leader for Ontario arts, poetry and language and as a focal point for the expression of Ontario culture and heritage. A Poet Laureate could champion the cause of literacy for our province, as has already been pointed out, by encouraging and promoting the importance of literature, culture and language, especially in these uncertain economic times for our province. In addition to the material efforts that are underway, there is a need to uplift the spirits of Ontarians. It is important to celebrate Ontario and its people, raise the profile of Ontario literary men and women and raise public awareness of the importance of poetry, prose and literature for the improvement of literacy skills.

A Poet Laureate for Ontario will also help to honour individuals who have made major contributions to the literary life of the whole province. It will add to the work already being done in the promotion of literacy and serve to assist in increasing literacy levels.

A Poet Laureate will also be a much-needed addition to the literature programs developed by the Ontario Arts Council, to the funding of writers and poets, and to the grants awarded by the Trillium Foundation to support publishing projects.

This need to further Ontario poetry and arts is linked to a wider problem regarding literature and the arts gen-

erally, and literacy skills specifically. As reported by Statistics Canada and the OECD, almost 50% of Canadians cannot work well with words and numbers, and four out of 10 adult Canadians struggle with low literacy. Literacy and the arts are important for Ontario.

In the riding of York South-Weston we are already involved in improving literacy levels for our community. In my riding, there are a variety of initiatives that focus on youth, engaging them through their love for music, popular culture, poetry and the spoken word. One of the most notable local organizations that work in this field is UrbanArts. UrbanArts organizes Culture Shock, a wonderful community festival that offers a multicultural showcase of hip-hop acts, dub poetry, spoken word artists. Every week this summer, they organized Voice Out, a community open-mike event that featured professionals in the fields of poetry and literature performing alongside local youth.

Initiatives such as these in York South-Weston have demonstrated the possibility of engaging our youth in a positive manner, keeping them off the streets and dedicated to valuable and enriching activities. In this context, a Poet Laureate would be an inspiring figure for people of all ages and would represent the true multicultural breadth of Ontario's cultural heritage—just as inspiring, for example, as Pier Giorgio Di Cicco has been for the city of Toronto during his tenure as Poet Laureate. I had the opportunity to meet him personally and had some lovely conversations with him after becoming really interested in his poetry whenever it was published in the Toronto Star. In fact, Di Cicco successfully extended the role of Poet Laureate beyond the area of arts advocacy into the realm of civic aesthetic, the building of a city by citizenship, civic ethic and urban psychology. His legacy project for the city of Toronto was appreciated and lauded everywhere.

Ontario would also benefit from her own literary ambassador who could instead have a wider scope and champion all the literary arts and wordsmiths of our great province. Other jurisdictions have already worked in this direction.

A Poet Laureate for Ontario would only be part of a larger strategy to promote poetry, the arts and culture, but it would be an essential part of this strategy. When the efforts of a Poet Laureate, whose credibility and professionalism are renowned and respected, are coupled with the efforts by government to improve literacy levels with programs and services, great results can be achieved.

The promotion of poetry, arts and culture in Ontario is an absolute necessity, and for these reasons, for the noble cause brought forth by my fellow member from York Centre, it could be valuable to remind ourselves of a glimpse of poetic wisdom voiced by none other than Edgar Allan Poe quite some time ago: "Poetry elevates the soul. Poetry is the rhythmical creation of beauty... and beauty is the province of poetry." There is much beauty in Ontario, and it's just waiting for us to celebrate it duly.

1540

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Mr. Kwinter, you have up to two minutes for your response.

**Mr. Monte Kwinter:** Poets' Corner is the name traditionally given to a section of the south transept of Westminster Abbey due to the number of poets, playwrights and writers now buried and commemorated there. The first person to be interred there was Geoffrey Chaucer. The erection of a magnificent tomb by Nicholas Brigham to Chaucer in the middle of the 16th century and the nearby burial of Edmund Spenser in 1599 started a tradition that is still upheld.

To the member from Toronto–Danforth, the plight of the artist is not something that is new and not all poets appreciated memorialization. Samuel Wesley's epitaph for Samuel Butler, who supposedly died in poverty, continued Butler's satiric tone.

I feel that a debate on a Poet Laureate cannot go without having a poem. This is the epitaph that was given to Butler:

While Butler, needy wretch, was yet alive,  
No generous patron would a dinner give;  
See him, when starv'd to death, and turn'd to dust,  
Presented with a monumental bust.  
The poet's fate is here in emblem shown,  
He ask'd for bread, and he received a stone.

I want to thank the members who participated in the debate: the member for Kitchener–Waterloo, the member for Toronto–Danforth, the member for Guelph and the member for York South–Weston. Hopefully we can go forward with this and establish the position of Poet Laureate.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** We'll vote on this ballot item in about 50 minutes.

#### BLACK HISTORY MONTH ACT, 2009

##### LOI DE 2009 SUR LE MOIS DE L'HISTOIRE DES NOIRS

Mr. Balkissoon moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 207, An Act to name February in each year Black History Month / Projet de loi 207, Loi visant à désigner le mois de février de chaque année comme Mois de l'histoire des Noirs.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Pursuant to standing order 98, the honourable member has up to 12 minutes for his presentation.

**Mr. Bas Balkissoon:** I'm extremely pleased to rise and speak on Bill 207, An Act to name February in each year Black History Month.

First of all, I would like to recognize Rosemary Sadlier, president, and Sally Houston, treasurer, of the Ontario Black History Society, joining us here today in the west gallery for this debate on Bill 207.

As everyone knows, I represent Scarborough–Rouge River, a riding with a very diverse population. Many of my residents are of African descent, from the continent and other parts of the world, especially the Caribbean

islands. I've been motivated to bring this bill forward by the many young people in my riding of African heritage who need to know those of their race who came before them and who have made a contribution to our great province and country. Also, a few years ago, sadly, a motion was put forward by a member of a school board in Ontario to get rid of Black History Month celebrations in their schools.

Black History Month is exactly what the young people in my riding and the province need. It provides them with hope, with inspiration, and it is an opportunity for them to remember and to appreciate the struggles and the achievements of the black Canadian community, an important part of our history.

As you also know, my constituency was formerly represented by the Honourable Alvin Curling, the first African-Canadian appointed Speaker of the Ontario Legislature, who has been a long-time political colleague and a strong supporter of mine.

The Honourable Lincoln Alexander served Ontario as the first African-Canadian Lieutenant Governor. I've had the opportunity to serve with His Honour on a city of Toronto Caribana review committee. I have the utmost respect and admiration for this distinguished Ontarian.

Black History Month can be traced back to 1926, which was started as Negro History Week, by Carter G. Woodson, a Harvard-educated black historian. His goal was to raise awareness and understanding by incorporating the African experience in the school curriculum. He would be happy to know that today there are schools in Ontario that recognize and celebrate Black History Month in February as part of the school's program.

Black History Month was officially recognized in Canada in the early 1950s, when the Canadian Negro Women's Association petitioned Toronto city council, and in 1979, in part due to the lobbying of the newly formed Ontario Black History Society, Toronto became the first municipality in Canada to proclaim Black History Month. National recognition became official on December 14, 1995, after Dr. Jean Augustine, currently appointed Ontario's Fairness Commissioner, requested and received unanimous consent to recognize February as Black History Month. She was also the first African-Canadian woman elected to the Parliament of Canada and then became the first African-Canadian federal cabinet minister.

Despite a presence dating back as early as 1603, when the first-known black man in Canada, Mathieu Da Costa, who acted as a translator between the Mi'kmaq and the French, arrived with Samuel de Champlain, people of African descent are often not part of Canadian history books. Very little is mentioned of the fact that slavery once existed in what is now Canada; or that many Loyalists who came here after the American Revolution and settled in the Maritimes were blacks; or the many sacrifices made by black Canadian soldiers during wars as far back as the war of 1812.

Black history refers to the stories, experiences and accomplishments of people of African origin. Here are some of their stories and some important firsts:

In 1628, Olivier Le Jeune, a seven-year-old native of Madagascar, was the first-known black slave to have lived in Canada.

In 1793, the Upper Canada Abolition Act, supported by Lieutenant Governor Simcoe, was enacted, making it illegal to bring slaves into Upper Canada, which made Canada the first jurisdiction in the British Empire to move towards the abolition of slavery.

Approximately 20,000 blacks found their way into Canada from 1800 to 1865 via the Underground Railroad, with the help of Harriet Tubman. She became known as the Moses of her people and the conductor who led hundreds of slaves to freedom. Despite great personal risk, when the United States fugitive law was passed, she guided fugitive slaves further north. Later she became a leader in the abolitionist movement. During the Civil War she worked as a nurse and served as a spy for the Union forces in South Carolina.

In 1853, Mary Ann Shadd was acknowledged as the first black newspaperwoman and first woman publisher of a newspaper in Canada.

In 1857, William Hall was the first Canadian sailor of African descent to receive the Victoria Cross for bravery and distinguished service.

In 1894, William Peyton Hubbard, council member, was elected to Toronto city council and served for 13 successive terms. He served on the board of control and was also the acting mayor.

In 1951, Reverend Addie Aylestock was the first black woman ordained as a minister in Canada.

I could go on and on with many stories of the black community, showing that they have made a significant contribution to our province and to our country, but in respect of my speaking time, I cannot provide all of those to you. But it is well known, what this community has made as a contribution to this country.

More than half a million people identified themselves as black in the 2006 census. Approximately 60,000 live here in Ontario, yet we have not formally recognized February as Black History Month. Although Black History Month is officially recognized in Canada and in the city of Toronto, it is not widely understood that it's not official in the province of Ontario.

As 2009 marks the 30th anniversary of the proclamation by the city of Toronto, an impressive milestone that has encouraged events and activities that celebrate Black History Month today, I hope that this bill finally becomes law in Ontario. I introduced it once before, in 2007, but unfortunately my luck wasn't that great and the House was prorogued for an election.

**1550**

I think it is essential that we do this to recognize the accomplishments of the African-Canadian community, and it is my hope that this bill provides inspiration to all residents in Ontario, especially our people of African heritage, to be proud, and to understand and appreciate the events of the past.

I want to leave the House with one final message that I have taken from Rosemary Sadlier, president of the

Ontario Black History Society. She wrote that "with roots dating back to 1603, African Canadians have defended, cleared, built and farmed this country. Our presence is well established but not well known." She goes on to say, "When the contributions of people of African descent are acknowledged, when the achievements of black people are known, when black people are routinely included and affirmed through our curriculum, our books and the media, and treated with equality, then there will no longer be a need for a Black History Month."

Many of us hope this will occur during our lifetime. I truly hope that the members of this House will support this particular bill again, and I really hope the government will enact this piece of legislation and finally recognize the contribution of a significant part of Ontario and Canadian society.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further debate? The member from Kitchener–Waterloo.

**Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer:** I am very pleased to speak today, on behalf of our critic, Ted Arnott, as well, regarding Bill 207, An Act to name February in each year Black History Month, introduced by Mr. Balkissoon. If this is going to be passed, which I hope it is this time, because it's the second introduction by Mr. Balkissoon, then we would of course have Black History Month each year in February.

We know that this bill is intended to highlight a very important part of Ontario's history; that is, the contributions of Canadians of African descent. I am very proud to say that in my community of Kitchener–Waterloo, we have many Canadians of African descent, and they play a very, very important part in the life of my community in the region of Waterloo.

We have this bill before us, and as I say, Mr. Balkissoon did introduce a similar bill, Bill 182, in March 2007. That bill was carried at second reading. It was referred to the Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly, and obviously it was never proclaimed by the government. Hopefully this one will get to the point where there is proclamation.

During the second reading debate that took place on the previous bill, two of my colleagues, Mr. Wilson and Frank Klees, spoke in favour of the bill, and did so on behalf of the entire PC caucus. I would say to you that today I stand here one more time on behalf of our caucus and again indicate our strong support for this bill.

Mr. Klees, at the time he spoke, noted that the Ontario government recognized Black History Month in 1993. He recognized the bill as symbolic, but he also argued that we should go beyond acknowledgment and recognition.

More recently, a bill was passed in this House—Bill 111, An Act to proclaim Emancipation Day—on December 4, 2008. This bill was initiated by Mr. Arnott, and he approached Maria Van Bommel to be the co-sponsor. When this bill was introduced, I just want to highlight the fact that this was the very first bill to be co-sponsored by MPPs from different parties. Mr. Arnott's bill to proclaim Emancipation Day, on December 4, 2008, proclaimed August 1 of each year as Emancipation

Day, in recognition of the abolition of slavery in the British empire. I am very pleased to say that Mr. Arnott had the support of Dr. Rosemary Sadlier, the president of the Ontario Black History Society. I'm very pleased that you're here today because I know he did appreciate the support that you did give him on Bill 111.

I think it's important to note that the Ontario Black History Society is a not-for-profit, registered Canadian charity. They are dedicated to the study, the preservation and the promotion of black history and heritage. I believe that whenever we are discussing legislation as we are doing today, it's very important that they be contacted and asked for their advice and also their support, and so I'm very pleased that at the last minute they were contacted and are able to be here today.

I think they thought, as many other people thought, that Black History Month had already been established. We need to remember that this is an issue that not just has provincial relevance but it also has national relevance. That's why, in December 1995, the Parliament of Canada officially recognized February as Black History Month, and that was following a motion that was introduced by the first black Canadian woman elected to Parliament, the Honourable Jean Augustine, the MP for Etobicoke-Lakeshore, who at that time was the parliamentary secretary to the Prime Minister. I'm very pleased to say that in December 1995 that motion was carried unanimously by the House of Commons. I have no doubt that the motion before us today will also be carried unanimously by all members, and I simply hope that this time we can move forward and see proclamation.

As I say, some of my colleagues have spoken before on this bill, and they did support it. I think that's very, very important. In fact, I would go back to February 5, 1997, when the Ontario Legislature gave unanimous consent to recognize February as Black History Month. Marilyn Mushinski, who also was from the Scarborough community and was Minister of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation, said at that time, "I am pleased to see that Black History Month has grown so much since its inception in 1926. Carter G. Woodson's dreams are kept alive by this growing annual tradition as more and more people become involved in the month-long celebrations here in Ontario and across North America."

So I think you can understand why some people already think we have Black History Month, because it appears that MPPs of all political parties and stripes have been very, very supportive and have recognized the need to keep the history of the black community alive and to make sure that we celebrate their many contributions to the life of this province.

I just want you to know that I support this bill, and we hope that it will pass through, that there will be proclamation and we will continue each February to be able to recognize and celebrate Black History Month. I know that in my own community of Kitchener-Waterloo there is a celebration. There is much that happens in order to ensure that we remember their contribution and that we do observe it. I hope all members will certainly support this.

1600

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further debate?

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** I too am happy to speak to Bill 207, an Act to name February in each year Black History Month. I do so acknowledging the member from Scarborough-Rouge River and accepting all of the remarks that have been made by the member from Scarborough-Rouge River. I have no doubt that this bill will pass, and it's a good thing that it pass.

I know there's a debate—we haven't talked about that debate but there is one—in the black community in particular. One famous example: The renowned actor Morgan Freeman, in an interview with 60 Minutes' Mike Wallace, stated that in his view Black History Month wasn't necessary and black history is American history and there's no need to dedicate a special month to it. He and many others, I am sure, say that and/or many different things in this debate.

We know that it exists and we know that people like Rosemary Sadlier—who was obviously acknowledged earlier by the member from Scarborough-Rouge River and quoted the member in the article that she wrote where she says, "When the contributions of people of African descent are acknowledged, when the achievements of black people are known, when black people are routinely included or affirmed through our curriculum, our books and the media, and treated with equality, then there will no longer be a need for Black History Month." It is that kind of debate: people who think we should move or transcend this need to recognize Black History Month and those who say we need to have it and only when they get the equality that they deserve can we then abolish this Black History Month. I happen to be one who supports people like Rosemary Sadlier and would want to say that rather than focusing on the contributions, which are many—and the member from Scarborough-Rouge River mentioned them and mentioned members of the black community who have a big profile in the community—those and those who do not have the same profile are indeed making a contribution and have made it for hundreds of years in this province.

So rather than talking about and naming individuals who are famous or not so famous, I would rather speak a little bit to where Rosemary Sadlier ended in her article and where the member from Scarborough-Rouge River ended, because what the member says in his bill—and he talks about it in the first sentence: "The history of Canadians of African descent and their struggle against slavery, racism, exclusion and inequality is a significant part of Ontario's history." It is not only a part of the history, it continues today, and that's really the debate we need to have. I know we want to talk about the contributions of black Canadians, and we should, but we need to make it part of the other history, the one where black Canadians face discrimination, racism, exclusion and inequality.

In my view that is the debate, because until we deal with and solve some of those questions, all the other stuff

is nice but it doesn't really deal with the fundamental problems that those who are black are dealing with on a regular basis. Until we acknowledge as white Canadians that we have racist tendencies, we're never going to be able to deal with those questions. It's hard. It's hard particularly for politicians, because nobody dares ever admit, in part or in whole, that we could be racist. We'd never want to say that. In fact, those words never come out of any politician's mouth. But we should be talking about it, because we do have tendencies. They're there, and we need to deal with them.

I have to tell you that I have my own personal history with this issue as a former school trustee with the Toronto board, where we celebrated Black History Month but we also had something that I am proud of, as a school trustee, and proud to have been a part of there having been a vote to have made it happen, which is the ability to teach international languages at the Toronto board, then called heritage languages and now called international languages, and, concurrently, to be able to provide black cultural heritage programs.

It's a proud history of the Toronto board. It's a history that we're slowly losing. The Toronto board is losing those programs because the funding isn't there. The Toronto board no longer has the money, so you don't have principals supporting the programs. If they exist, it's not because the board is promoting them; it's because, where they exist, the community is supporting them, and where they do exist, you probably have some principals actively making it happen. But they're slowly dying—the international languages program, that is. I believe that unless we commit ourselves, as a board and locally and as a province, to continue with those programs, they will eventually die off because the funding won't be there.

I, as a school trustee, when I had my time there for eight long full-time years because I quit as a teacher to do that on a full-time basis, earning \$7,000 at the time when I got elected in 1982—

**Interjection:** With no pension.

**Mr. Rosario Marchese:** —with no pension—I remember dealing with issues of streaming in the educational system. I remember my former colleagues—I shouldn't say "former"; I was a teacher. I remember my colleagues not being happy with me attacking the notion of streaming. I remember principals in my riding inviting me to a lecture about my views on streaming and why it was that I should be talking about how the system possibly discriminates and sorts kids out and streams them in a way that children of colour in particular and other linguistic communities end up in reading groups that are not at the high level but end up at the lower levels, and when you get into the high school system, certain folks, students of colour in particular—Italian Canadians in the 1960s, Portuguese Canadians in the 1970s and 1980s and now the Spanish-speaking community in general—end up being streamed in vocational schools.

You say, "How could that be? It can't be deliberate." I had all of the principals attacking me on my views about

why it is that it's happening and what we could do as a system to solve that. We stream kids, and then we say, "There's nothing we can do. It's cultural." Why is it that some communities do well? And if some communities do well, then others who do not must be cultural. I argued that we, as a system, have a lot to do to reshape that streaming process, that we could help and we could deal with social issues and economic issues that affect them, that force them into certain categories. Boy, was I attacked by the principals.

We know racial profiling exists. We know that. There are some who deny it, but we know it exists. I remember Zanana Akande, who was a member of provincial Parliament with me in 1990 as a New Democrat. She talked about her experience of her son going home on an evening on Spadina and Eglinton. He was going home and some police cruiser stopped by and actually arrested the young man because they obviously believed and thought that no black family could be living in that community. It's racial profiling. It's but one little example. There are so many. It exists.

We know that because of streaming, because of the concerns that black men and women have had over the years and why it is that so many black students end up dropping out early and not succeeding, that they wanted a chance to have a pilot project where African Canadian kids—black kids—could go and test it out, test out how it is that a school where only black kids could go—and others could go as well—but given the choice, where black kids could be in a school, focusing on black history, focusing on how we can make it possible for those kids to succeed.

**1610**

We had resistance from the Toronto board, but eventually, they allowed it. We had resistance from the Premier. He said no; he doesn't support it. Rather than acknowledging, validating the concerns of black parents that they're not succeeding in the regular system, that we needed an alternative school that could give them a chance to succeed, to focus on themselves as black Canadians, there was strong resistance. We now know that not only have they met the enrolments, but they've gone beyond them. They need to find a different way to deal with the fact that there are more and more students who want to get into the school.

We have to deal with issues of discrimination and racism. We know that there are many people in the black community who have good academic credentials, yet they are the first fired and last hired. It's wrong. They earn less than white Canadians. It's wrong. Why is it that we tolerate that?

As I speak to my friend from Scarborough—Rouge River and I support his motion, we need to deal with all of the issues that are profound and systemic. Unless we deal with them and only focus on celebrating Black History Month, we're not doing justice to the black community, we're not dealing with issues of inequality and we're not dealing with issues of racism.

Yes, let's recognize the accomplishments of African Canadians by celebrating each year Black History

Month, now to be recognized, once we pass it, by the province; let's celebrate the contributions, but let's deal with the real problems that many black Ontarians still face. Until we deal with them, they will not be genuine in quality, as they should be.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further debate?

**Mrs. Maria Van Bommel:** I want to commend the member from Trinity–Spadina for his reminder to all of us of our responsibilities and certainly of our shortcomings. We have a long way to go yet.

I actually am very pleased to be standing here again today. It has been almost a year since I was invited by the member from Wellington–Halton Hills to co-sponsor Bill 111, the act to declare Emancipation Day. It's certainly a great pleasure to stand here again to speak in support of Bill 207.

Black history is a story of individual sacrifice, courage and heroism. That history is available to be taken in many museums and interpretive centres across the province of Ontario. A number of them exist in my own riding. I have the honour and the privilege of having many parts of the Underground Railroad come through my riding. Some of these museums and interpretive centres are in places like Buxton; they're in Lucan; and they're in Dresden. Anyone who wants to go there and take the time will hear and experience the dangers and the hardships that were endured by the slaves as they tried to escape from the oppression of slavery.

In Lucan, you'll find the remnants of a black community called Wilberforce. Wilberforce no longer exists there, but it's named after William Wilberforce, who is known as a liberator. As a tribute to that history, the new elementary school in Lucan is now named Wilberforce. To many in the community, it's a reminder of their part in black history.

If you go into the southern part of my riding, at the bend in the Sydenham River you will come to a community just outside of Dresden called Uncle Tom's Cabin. That is the early settlement, the Dawn settlement, of slaves as they tried to escape through the Underground Railroad. Uncle Tom's Cabin was actually the home of Reverend Josiah Henson and his wife Nancy. They lived there and started the school, started educating people as they came through, but they were an integral part of the Underground Railroad. The Underground Railroad had conductors on it; it had brakemen on it. These people were a means of helping slaves to move from the States, in particular the southern states, and into Canada because Canada had already been emancipated. So it was very important for them to do this.

I'm very proud of these in my community. I know that the history certainly is reflected there, and I feel that to have February declared as Black History Month would just further enhance what has already been done in the community in terms of preserving that history. Thank you.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further debate?

**Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne:** I'm very pleased to rise to support Bill 207 and to support the notion of official designation of February in Ontario as Black History Month. I want to just pick up on what other folks have said, how important it is that we create opportunities—and I feel in my role as Minister of Education that it's extremely important that we create opportunities for people to hear their stories, tell their stories, and particularly for children to hear the stories of their families. I think in our schools, this is an extremely important aspect of what happens during Black History Month.

I want to pick up on something that the member for Trinity–Spadina said, and that is that there is more to be done and there are other, more systemic things that we also need to do beyond what happens in Black History Month. I just wanted to point out that we recently, this year, introduced our equity and inclusive education strategy. What that does is it supports and expects that school boards will have an equity strategy and an inclusive education strategy in place, and that they will work on creating better resources and making sure that all children, no matter what their background, no matter what their creed, no matter what their cultural makeup is, will feel included and will be part of the classroom and part of the school.

That strategy that is in place now in Ontario schools and is being developed picks up on work that actually was done by the NDP when they were in office. It's extremely important work, and it builds on all of the work that people like Rosemary Sadlier have done and reinforces it in our schools. Our children need to feel safe and they need to hear their stories.

I want to just say, too, that I believe that Black History Month is a concentrated opportunity to look at Canadian stories. I don't know if people have had a chance to read Lawrence Hill's *The Book of Negroes* or Mary Tilberg's *Oonagh*, but those are stories about Ontario and Canada. They are stories about African-Canadians and how their stories connect with people of African descent from other countries—the United States, Britain, the black diaspora.

It's extremely important to me as the Minister of Education that we have Black History Month designated. It's extremely important to the diversity of this province that we support this notion, and I know that the member for Scarborough–Rouge River has done a good thing in bringing this forward.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Further debate?

**Mr. Tony Ruprecht:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise in support of Bill 207. I'm delighted that the member from Scarborough–Rouge River is bringing forward this bill again for the second time and I know that it will, no doubt, receive unanimous support from all the parties.

My black history includes a number of persons that you and I know personally, and others as well. But it includes William Hubbard—let's start in 1893—the first black politician in Toronto, who was elected and re-elected 13 consecutive times. The number of residents who could trace their ancestry to Africa in those days, in 1860, was 1,400 in the city of Toronto. So we've made a

great deal of progress when we look at the numbers we have today, and we are proud of all those who make a contribution to our culture, our history and our life here in Toronto.

**1620**

My black history includes Daniel Hill, the former Ombudsman of Ontario and the first director of the Ontario Human Rights Commission. My black history includes Rosemary Sadlier, who, of course, was mentioned a number of times here today and who is president of the Ontario Black History Society and a member of the Ontario Heritage Alliance. I'd like to thank her personally today and recognize her for making a tremendous contribution to a book called Toronto's Many Faces, from which I happen to read right now. So thank you very much, Rosemary, for making your contribution to the book.

My black history includes Jean Augustine, the first minister of African Canadian heritage in the government of Canada. And certainly, my black history includes our friend and the first black Speaker of the Ontario Legislature, Dr. Alvin Curling, who has made, of course, a tremendous contribution to life here in Toronto and has affected our lives directly and indirectly for many years.

What all of these people, all of these heroes, have in common is not only a heritage but also they have a belief, a belief that there can be equality of law, of treatment and of education that so many of you spoke about. This kind of equality and treatment of respect should be reflected in our figures of authority. So the biggest contribution we can make today is to try to ensure that our children in our schools see themselves reflected in figures of authority. That is so important. Why? Because we have some indicators of what happens when a child becomes successful, when a child later on in life begins to bloom and make a contribution and takes the right steps in their life. We know that. We know what happens.

You can find those details in a book called Psycho-Cybernetics by a German named Dr. Maltz. I think it was Dr. Maltz who wrote the book. He says in the book that the principal indicator of a child's success in the future is that he or she must have a sense of self-worth. The way the children get a sense of self-worth is to see reflected—in the curriculum of the school, in the figures of authority and within their own lives on a daily basis—their own lives, their culture, their dreams and their traditions.

It is really of utmost importance that we make this contribution. In fact, I would hope that this bill is going to be unanimously accepted today. I hope that when we pass this bill that we make a tremendous contribution to these children, because they are our future.

So while we are supporting this bill today, we must realize that our children have to have a good start and the start they will have in life depends on what we leave them. What you and I have done today by supporting this bill is a tremendous step in the right direction, in the direction to ensure that these children will take the right steps and that these children will receive some idea that we care for them, that we believe that we're all in this together, that we believe that we and the children are one

family. And as a family, of course, we have a tremendous interest in these children because they belong to us.

So I say to Ms. Sadlier, who is here today, and I say to all Ontarians, we have a duty to perform, and that duty is to ensure that our system is open and that our system is a system of justice and fairness. That, today, is what we are doing when we support this bill.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Mr. Balkissoon, you have up to two minutes for your response.

**Mr. Bas Balkissoon:** I just want to say thank you to the member from Kitchener–Waterloo, the member from Trinity–Spadina, the member from Lambton–Kent–Middlesex, the Minister of Education—the member from Don Valley West—and the member from Davenport for their kind words on this particular bill, especially the encouragement that they all have given.

As I stated before, it was very sad to know that just a couple of years ago, a school trustee in one of our prominent school boards wanted to get rid of Black History Month celebrations. That was very depressing.

Along with that, many of you may know it was only eight short years ago that I served as a member of the Toronto Police Services Board, and I can tell you when I was on that board, I raised the issue of equity, discrimination and many times demanded that sensitivity training be given to our police officers. It was sad to note recently that the chief of police for Toronto actually commented that racial profiling still exists.

I brought this bill, again, to encourage the young people in my riding and to support them. As I stated before, it was only in 1793, just over 200 years ago, that Lieutenant Governor Simcoe gave us the motivation to abolish slavery—200 years ago. I still think we have to do everything we can to bring the issue to the forefront to really accomplish what Ms. Sadlier has said in her remarks, that when we remove all of this in our society and our black African-Canadian community truly has equity with all of us in this province, it's then we have achieved what we started out to do. As leaders of our communities, we need to do what's best for the people of Ontario.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Thank you. The time provided for private members' public business has expired.

#### ONTARIO COLLEGE OF TRADES

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** We will deal first with ballot item number 37, standing in the name of Mr. Bailey.

Mr. Bailey has moved private member's notice of motion 113. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour of the motion, please say "aye."

All those opposed, please say "nay."

In my opinion, the nays have it.

I declare the motion lost.

*Motion negatived.*

## ONTARIO POET LAUREATE

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** We will now deal with the next ballot item, number 38.

Mr. Kwinter has moved private member's notice of motion 114. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I declare the motion carried.

*Motion agreed to.*

## BLACK HISTORY MONTH ACT, 2009

LOI DE 2009 SUR LE MOIS  
DE L'HISTOIRE DES NOIRS

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** We'll now deal with ballot item number 39.

Mr. Balkissoon has moved second reading of Bill 207, An Act to name February in each year Black History

Month. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I declare the motion carried.

*Second reading agreed to.*

**Mr. Bas Balkissoon:** I'd like the bill to be sent to the Standing Committee on Social Policy.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Is it agreed that the bill be referred to the Standing Committee on Social Policy? Agreed. So ordered.

Orders of the day.

**Hon. Brad Duguid:** I move adjournment of the House.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Jim Wilson):** Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

This House stands adjourned until next Monday at 10:30 a.m.

*The House adjourned at 1628.*

**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO**  
**ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO**

Lieutenant Governor / Lieutenant-gouverneur: Hon. / L'hon. David C. Onley, O.Ont.

Speaker / Président: Hon. / L'hon. Steve Peters

Clerk / Greffière: Deborah Deller

Clerks-at-the-Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Todd Decker, Lisa Freedman, Tonia Grannum

Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergent d'armes: Dennis Clark

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Aggelonitis, Sophia (LIB)	Hamilton Mountain	
Albanese, Laura (LIB)	York South–Weston / York-Sud–Weston	
Arnott, Ted (PC)	Wellington–Halton Hills	
Arthurs, Wayne (LIB)	Pickering–Scarborough East / Pickering–Scarborough-Est	
Bailey, Robert (PC)	Sarnia–Lambton	
Balkissoon, Bas (LIB)	Scarborough–Rouge River	
Barrett, Toby (PC)	Haldimand–Norfolk	
<b>Bartolucci, Hon. / L'hon. Rick (LIB)</b>	Sudbury	Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services / Ministre de la Sécurité communautaire et des Services correctionnels
<b>Bentley, Hon. / L'hon. Christopher (LIB)</b>	London West / London-Ouest	Attorney General / Procureur général
Berardinetti, Lorenzo (LIB)	Scarborough Southwest / Scarborough-Sud-Ouest	
<b>Best, Hon. / L'hon. Margaret R. (LIB)</b>	Scarborough–Guildwood	Minister of Health Promotion / Ministre de la Promotion de la santé
Bisson, Gilles (NDP)	Timmins–James Bay / Timmins–Baie James	
<b>Bradley, Hon. / L'hon. James J. (LIB)</b>	St. Catharines	Minister of Transportation / Ministre des Transports
<b>Brotten, Hon. / L'hon. Laurel C. (LIB)</b>	Etobicoke–Lakeshore	Minister of Children and Youth Services / Ministre des Services à l'enfance et à la jeunesse Minister Responsible for Women's Issues / Ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine
Brown, Michael A. (LIB)	Algoma–Manitoulin	
Brownell, Jim (LIB)	Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry	
<b>Cansfield, Hon. / L'hon. Donna H. (LIB)</b>	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	Minister of Natural Resources / Ministre des Richesses naturelles
Caplan, David (LIB)	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	
<b>Carroll, Hon. / L'hon. M. Aileen (LIB)</b>	Barrie	Minister of Culture / Ministre de la Culture Minister Responsible for Seniors / Ministre déléguée aux Affaires des personnes âgées
<b>Chan, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)</b>	Markham–Unionville	Minister of Citizenship and Immigration / Ministre des Affaires civiques et de l'Immigration
Chudleigh, Ted (PC)	Halton	
Colle, Mike (LIB)	Eglinton–Lawrence	
Craitor, Kim (LIB)	Niagara Falls	
<b>Crozier, Bruce (LIB)</b>	Essex	Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée Deputy Speaker / Vice-président
Delaney, Bob (LIB)	Mississauga–Streetsville	
Dhillon, Vic (LIB)	Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest	
Dickson, Joe (LIB)	Ajax–Pickering	
<b>DiNovo, Cheri (NDP)</b>	Parkdale–High Park	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième vice-présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
<b>Dombrowsky, Hon. / L'hon. Leona (LIB)</b>	Prince Edward–Hastings	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales
<b>Duguid, Hon. / L'hon. Brad (LIB)</b>	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough-Centre	Minister of Aboriginal Affairs / Ministre des Affaires autochtones Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint du gouvernement
<b>Duncan, Hon. / L'hon. Dwight (LIB)</b>	Windsor–Tecumseh	Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet / Président du Conseil de gestion du gouvernement Minister of Finance / Ministre des Finances
Dunlop, Garfield (PC)	Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord	
Elliott, Christine (PC)	Whitby–Oshawa	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjointe de l'opposition officielle

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Flynn, Kevin Daniel (LIB)	Oakville	
<b>Fonseca, Hon. / L'hon. Peter (LIB)</b>	Mississauga East–Cooksville / Mississauga-Est–Cooksville	Minister of Labour / Ministre du Travail
Gélinas, France (NDP)	Nickel Belt	
<b>Gerretsen, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)</b>	Kingston and the Islands / Kingston et les Îles	Minister of the Environment / Ministre de l'Environnement
<b>Gravelle, Hon. / L'hon. Michael (LIB)</b>	Thunder Bay–Superior North / Thunder Bay–Superior-Nord	Minister of Northern Development, Mines and Forestry / Ministre du Développement du Nord, des Mines et des Forêts
Hampton, Howard (NDP)	Kenora–Rainy River	
Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Oxford	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de l'opposition officielle
Hillier, Randy (PC)	Lanark–Frontenac–Lennox and Addington	
Horwath, Andrea (NDP)	Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	Leader, Recognized Party / Chef de parti reconnu Leader, New Democratic Party of Ontario / Chef du Nouveau parti démocratique de l'Ontario
Hoskins, Eric (LIB)	St. Paul's	
Hoy, Pat (LIB)	Chatham–Kent–Essex	
Hudak, Tim (PC)	Niagara West–Glanbrook / Niagara- Ouest–Glanbrook	Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle Leader, Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti progressiste-conservateur de l'Ontario
Jaczek, Helena (LIB)	Oak Ridges–Markham	
Jeffrey, Linda (LIB)	Brampton–Springdale	
Johnson, Rick (LIB)	Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock	
Jones, Sylvia (PC)	Dufferin–Caledon	
Klees, Frank (PC)	Newmarket–Aurora	
Kormos, Peter (NDP)	Welland	Third Party House Leader / Leader parlementaire de parti reconnu
Kular, Kuldip (LIB)	Bramalea–Gore–Malton	
Kwinter, Monte (LIB)	York Centre / York-Centre	
Lalonde, Jean-Marc (LIB)	Glengarry–Prescott–Russell	
Leal, Jeff (LIB)	Peterborough	
Levac, Dave (LIB)	Brant	
MacLeod, Lisa (PC)	Nepean–Carleton	
Mangat, Amrit (LIB)	Mississauga–Brampton South / Mississauga–Brampton-Sud	
Marchese, Rosario (NDP)	Trinity–Spadina	
Martiniuk, Gerry (PC)	Cambridge	
<b>Matthews, Hon. / L'hon. Deborah (LIB)</b>	London North Centre / London- Centre-Nord	Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / Ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
Mauro, Bill (LIB)	Thunder Bay–Atikokan	
<b>McGuinty, Hon. / L'hon. Dalton (LIB)</b>	Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / Ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales Premier / Premier ministre Leader, Liberal Party of Ontario / Chef du Parti libéral de l'Ontario
<b>McMeekin, Hon. / L'hon. Ted (LIB)</b>	Ancaster–Dundas–Flamborough– Westdale	Minister of Consumer Services / Ministre des Services aux consommateurs
McNeely, Phil (LIB)	Ottawa–Orléans	
<b>Meilleur, Hon. / L'hon. Madeleine (LIB)</b>	Ottawa–Vanier	Minister of Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires Minister Responsible for Francophone Affairs / Ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones
Miller, Norm (PC)	Parry Sound–Muskoka	
Miller, Paul (NDP)	Hamilton East–Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est–Stoney Creek	
<b>Milloy, Hon. / L'hon. John (LIB)</b>	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	Minister of Research and Innovation / Ministre de la Recherche et de l'Innovation Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities / Ministre de la Formation et des Collèges et Universités
Mitchell, Carol (LIB)	Huron–Bruce	
Moridi, Reza (LIB)	Richmond Hill	
<b>Munro, Julia (PC)</b>	York–Simcoe	Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Troisième vice-présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative

<b>Member and Party / Député(e) et parti</b>	<b>Constituency / Circonscription</b>	<b>Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités</b>
Murdoch, Bill (PC)	Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound	
Naqvi, Yasir (LIB)	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	
O’Toole, John (PC)	Durham	
Oraziotti, David (LIB)	Sault Ste. Marie	
Ouellette, Jerry J. (PC)	Oshawa	
Pendergast, Leeanna (LIB)	Kitchener–Conestoga	
<b>Peters, Hon. / L’hon. Steve (LIB)</b>	Elgin–Middlesex–London	Speaker / Président de l’Assemblée législative
<b>Phillips, Hon. / L’hon. Gerry (LIB)</b>	Scarborough–Agincourt	Chair of Cabinet / Président du Conseil des ministres Minister Without Portfolio / Ministre sans portefeuille
Prue, Michael (NDP)	Beaches–East York	
<b>Pupatello, Hon. / L’hon. Sandra (LIB)</b>	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	Minister of Economic Development and Trade / Ministre du Développement économique et du Commerce
Qaadri, Shafiq (LIB)	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	
Ramal, Khalil (LIB)	London–Fanshawe	
Ramsay, David (LIB)	Timiskaming–Cochrane	
Rinaldi, Lou (LIB)	Northumberland–Quinte West	
Runciman, Robert W. (PC)	Leeds–Grenville	Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire de l’opposition officielle
Ruprecht, Tony (LIB)	Davenport	
Sandals, Liz (LIB)	Guelph	
Savoline, Joyce (PC)	Burlington	
Sergio, Mario (LIB)	York West / York-Ouest	
Shurman, Peter (PC)	Thornhill	
<b>Smith, Hon. / L’hon. Monique M. (LIB)</b>	Nipissing	Minister of Tourism / Ministre du Tourisme Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement
<b>Smitherman, Hon. / L’hon. George (LIB)</b>	Toronto Centre / Toronto-Centre	Deputy Premier / Vice-premier ministre Minister of Energy and Infrastructure / Ministre de l’Énergie et de l’Infrastructure
Sorbara, Greg (LIB)	Vaughan	
Sousa, Charles (LIB)	Mississauga South / Mississauga-Sud	
Sterling, Norman W. (PC)	Carleton–Mississippi Mills	
Tabuns, Peter (NDP)	Toronto–Danforth	Deputy Third Party House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de parti reconnu
<b>Takhar, Hon. / L’hon. Harinder S. (LIB)</b>	Mississauga–Erindale	Minister of Government Services / Ministre des Services gouvernementaux
Van Bommel, Maria (LIB)	Lambton–Kent–Middlesex	
<b>Watson, Hon. / L’hon. Jim (LIB)</b>	Ottawa West–Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest–Nepean	Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / Ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
<b>Wilkinson, Hon. / L’hon. John (LIB)</b>	Perth–Wellington	Minister of Revenue / Ministre du Revenu
<b>Wilson, Jim (PC)</b>	Simcoe–Grey	First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Premier vice-président du comité plénier de l’Assemblée
Witmer, Elizabeth (PC)	Kitchener–Waterloo	
<b>Wynne, Hon. / L’hon. Kathleen O. (LIB)</b>	Don Valley West / Don Valley-Ouest	Minister of Education / Ministre de l’Éducation
Yakabuski, John (PC)	Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke	Deputy Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint de l’opposition officielle
Zimmer, David (LIB)	Willowdale	

**STANDING AND SELECT COMMITTEES OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY  
COMITÉS PERMANENTS ET SPÉCIAUX DE L'ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE**

**Standing Committee on Estimates / Comité permanent des budgets des dépenses**

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Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Robert Bailey  
Robert Bailey, Gilles Bisson  
Jim Brownell, Kim Craiton  
Bob Delaney, Garfield Dunlop  
Phil McNeely, John O'Toole  
Khalil Ramal  
Clerks / Greffiers: William Short (pro tem.), Sylwia Przewdziecki

**Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs /  
Comité permanent des finances et des affaires économiques**

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Laura Albanese, Wayne Arthurs  
Toby Barrett, Kevin Daniel Flynn  
Eric Hoskins, Pat Hoy  
Michael Prue, Peter Shurman  
Charles Sousa  
Committee Clerk / Greffier: William Short

**Standing Committee on General Government / Comité  
permanent des affaires gouvernementales**

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Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Helena Jaczek  
Helena Jaczek, Kuldip Kular  
Amrit Mangat, Rosario Marchese  
Bill Mauro, Reza Moridi  
David Oraziatti, Joyce Savoline  
John Yakabuski  
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Trevor Day

**Standing Committee on Government Agencies / Comité  
permanent des organismes gouvernementaux**

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Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Lisa MacLeod  
Laura Albanese, Michael A. Brown  
Howard Hampton, Ernie Hardeman  
Rick Johnson, Lisa MacLeod  
Yasir Naqvi, Leeanna Pendergast  
Jim Wilson  
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Douglas Arnott

**Standing Committee on Justice Policy / Comité permanent de  
la justice**

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Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Jeff Leal  
Lorenzo Berardinetti, Ted Chudleigh  
Christine Elliott, Peter Kormos  
Jeff Leal, Dave Levac  
Leeanna Pendergast, Lou Rinaldi  
David Zimmer  
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Susan Sourial

**Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly / Comité  
permanent de l'Assemblée législative**

Chair / Président: Bas Balkissoon  
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Khalil Ramal  
Bas Balkissoon, Jim Brownell  
Bob Delaney, Joe Dickson  
Rick Johnson, Sylvia Jones  
Norm Miller, Khalil Ramal  
Peter Tabuns  
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Tonia Grannum

**Standing Committee on Public Accounts / Comité permanent  
des comptes publics**

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Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Ted Arnott  
Ted Arnott, France Gélinas  
Phil McNeely, Jerry J. Ouellette  
David Ramsay, Liz Sandals  
Norman W. Sterling, Maria Van Bommel  
David Zimmer  
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Katch Koch

**Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills / Comité  
permanent des règlements et des projets de loi d'intérêt privé**

Chair / Président: Michael Prue  
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Paul Miller  
Bas Balkissoon, Mike Colle  
Kim Craiton, Gerry Martiniuk  
Paul Miller, Bill Murdoch  
Michael Prue, Tony Ruprecht  
Mario Sergio  
Clerks / Greffiers: Trevor Day (pro tem.), Sylwia Przewdziecki

**Standing Committee on Social Policy / Comité permanent de  
la politique sociale**

Chair / Président: Shafiq Qaadri  
Vice-Chair / Vice-président: Vic Dhillon  
Sophia Aggelonitis, Vic Dhillon  
Cheri DiNovo, Linda Jeffrey  
Sylvia Jones, Jean-Marc Lalonde  
Carol Mitchell, Shafiq Qaadri  
Elizabeth Witmer  
Committee Clerk / Greffier: Katch Koch

**Select Committee on Mental Health and Addictions / Comité  
spécial de la santé mentale et des dépendances**

Chair / Président: Kevin Daniel Flynn  
Vice-Chair / Vice-présidente: Christine Elliott  
Bas Balkissoon, Christine Elliott  
Kevin Daniel Flynn, France Gélinas  
Helena Jaczek, Sylvia Jones  
Jeff Leal, Liz Sandals  
Maria Van Bommel  
Committee Clerk / Greffière: Susan Sourial

Continued from back cover

<b>Scotty Ramage</b>	
Mr. Wayne Arthurs .....	8110
<b>Endangered species</b>	
Mr. John Yakabuski .....	8111
<b>Child care</b>	
Mr. Peter Tabuns .....	8111
<b>Hanover Veneer</b>	
Mrs. Carol Mitchell .....	8111
<b>Disaster relief</b>	
Mr. Jim Wilson .....	8112
<b>School breakfast program</b>	
Mr. Mario Sergio .....	8112
<b>Small business</b>	
Mrs. Amrit Mangat .....	8112
<b>Islamic History Month</b>	
Mr. Yasir Naqvi .....	8112
<b>Private members' public business</b>	
The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier) .....	8113

**REPORTS BY COMMITTEES /  
RAPPORTS DES COMITÉS**

<b>Standing Committee on General Government</b>	
Ms. Helena Jaczek .....	8113
Report adopted .....	8113

**INTRODUCTION OF BILLS /  
DÉPÔT DES PROJETS DE LOI**

<b>1105481 Ontario Inc. Act, 2009, Bill Pr28, Mr. Kular</b>	
First reading agreed to .....	8113

**STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY  
AND RESPONSES / DÉCLARATIONS  
MINISTÉRIELLES ET RÉPONSES**

<b>Economic outlook and fiscal review / Perspectives économiques et revue financière</b>	
Hon. Dwight Duncan .....	8113
Mr. Tim Hudak .....	8116
Mr. Michael Prue .....	8116

**PETITIONS / PÉTITIONS**

<b>Taxation</b>	
Mr. Jim Wilson .....	8117
<b>Tom Longboat</b>	
Mr. Jim Brownell .....	8117

<b>Hospital funding</b>	
Mr. Norm Miller .....	8117
<b>Identity theft</b>	
Mr. Tony Ruprecht .....	8118
<b>Sale of domestic wines and beers</b>	
Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer .....	8118
<b>Cemeteries</b>	
Mr. Jim Brownell .....	8118
<b>School transportation</b>	
Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer .....	8118
<b>Diabetes treatment</b>	
Mr. Tony Ruprecht .....	8119
<b>Cemeteries</b>	
Mr. Jim Brownell .....	8119
<b>Rail line construction</b>	
Mr. Tony Ruprecht .....	8119
<b>Cemeteries</b>	
Mr. Jim Brownell .....	8120

**PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS /  
AFFAIRES D'INTÉRÊT PUBLIC  
ÉMANANT DES DÉPUTÉS**

<b>Ontario College of Trades</b>	
Mr. Robert Bailey .....	8120
Mr. Khalil Ramal .....	8122
Mr. Rosario Marchese .....	8122
Mr. Kevin Daniel Flynn .....	8124
Mr. Frank Klees .....	8125
Mr. Robert Bailey .....	8126
<b>Ontario Poet Laureate</b>	
Mr. Monte Kwinter .....	8126
Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer .....	8128
Mr. Peter Tabuns .....	8130
Mrs. Liz Sandals .....	8131
Mrs. Laura Albanese .....	8132
Mr. Monte Kwinter .....	8133
<b>Black History Month Act, 2009, Bill 207, Mr. Balkissoon / Loi de 2009 sur le Mois de l'histoire des Noirs, projet de loi 207, M. Balkissoon</b>	
Mr. Bas Balkissoon .....	8133
Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer .....	8134
Mr. Rosario Marchese .....	8135
Mrs. Maria Van Bommel .....	8137
Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne .....	8137
Mr. Tony Ruprecht .....	8137
Mr. Bas Balkissoon .....	8138
<b>Ontario College of Trades</b>	
Motion negated .....	8138

**Ontario Poet Laureate**

Motion agreed to..... 8139

**Black History Month Act, 2009, Bill 207,  
Mr. Balkissoon / Loi de 2009 sur le Mois de  
l'histoire des Noirs, projet de loi 207,  
M. Balkissoon**

Second reading agreed to..... 8139

# CONTENTS / TABLE DES MATIÈRES

Thursday 22 October 2009 / Jeudi 22 octobre 2009

## ORDERS OF THE DAY / ORDRE DU JOUR

<b>Interprovincial Policing Act, 2009, Bill 203, Mr. Bartolucci / Loi de 2009 sur les services policiers interprovinciaux, projet de loi 203, M. Bartolucci</b>	
Mr. Michael Prue .....	8097
Mr. Dave Levac.....	8098
Mr. Michael Prue .....	8098
Mr. John Yakabuski .....	8099
Mr. Garfield Dunlop .....	8099
Mr. Dave Levac.....	8099
Mr. John Yakabuski .....	8100
Second reading agreed to .....	8100

## INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS / PRÉSENTATION DES VISITEURS

Hon. Madeleine Meilleur .....	8100
Mr. Norm Miller .....	8100
Ms. Andrea Horwath.....	8100
Hon. Deborah Matthews .....	8100
Mr. Paul Miller.....	8100
The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters).....	8100
<b>Use of question period</b>	
The Speaker (Hon. Steve Peters).....	8100

## ORAL QUESTIONS / QUESTIONS ORALES

<b>Electronic health information</b>	
Mr. Ted Arnott .....	8101
Hon. Dalton McGuinty.....	8101
<b>Government's record</b>	
Mr. Robert W. Runciman.....	8101
Hon. Harinder S. Takhar .....	8101
Hon. Deborah Matthews .....	8102
<b>Taxation</b>	
Ms. Andrea Horwath.....	8102
Hon. Dalton McGuinty.....	8102
<b>Taxation</b>	
Ms. Andrea Horwath.....	8103
Hon. Dalton McGuinty.....	8103
<b>Health care</b>	
Mr. Norm Miller .....	8103
Hon. Deborah Matthews .....	8103

## Health care

Mme France Gélinas .....	8104
Hon. Deborah Matthews .....	8104

## Flu immunization

Mr. Eric Hoskins .....	8104
Hon. Deborah Matthews .....	8105

## Post-secondary education

Mr. Jim Wilson.....	8105
Hon. John Milloy .....	8105

## Senior citizens

Mr. Paul Miller.....	8106
Hon. Deborah Matthews .....	8106

## Taxation

Mr. Lou Rinaldi.....	8106
Hon. John Wilkinson.....	8106

## Curriculum

Mrs. Elizabeth Witmer .....	8107
Hon. Kathleen O. Wynne .....	8107

## Post-secondary education

Mr. Rosario Marchese .....	8108
Hon. John Milloy .....	8108

## Services en français

M. Yasir Naqvi.....	8108
L'hon. Madeleine Meilleur .....	8108

## Tire disposal

Ms. Sylvia Jones.....	8109
Hon. John Gerretsen.....	8109
Hon. Leona Dombrowsky .....	8109

## Assistance to farmers

Mr. Michael Prue .....	8109
Hon. Dalton McGuinty.....	8109

## Tourism

Mr. Rick Johnson .....	8110
Hon. Monique M. Smith .....	8110

## Supplementary estimates

Hon. Dwight Duncan.....	8110
The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Bruce Crozier) .....	8110

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS / DÉCLARATIONS DES DÉPUTÉS

### National Foster Family Week

Ms. Sylvia Jones.....	8110
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*Continued on inside back cover*